



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of English Language and Literature
British Cultural Studies Programme

**IDEOLOGY AND MIDDLE CLASS VALUES IN CHARLES DICKENS'S
OLIVER TWIST AND *GREAT EXPECTATIONS*:
AN ALTHUSSERIAN STUDY**

Aydan Turalı

M.A. Thesis

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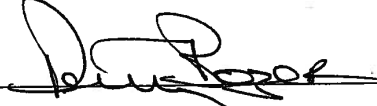
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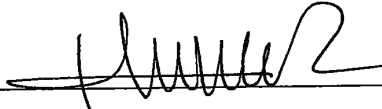
KABUL VE ONAY


Aydan TURALI tarafından hazırlanmış olan “Ideology and Middle Class Values in Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*: An Althusserian Study” başlıklı bu çalışma, 30 Nisan 2010 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunmuş olup jürimiz tarafından Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.


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Doç. Dr. Ayül ÖZÜM (Danışman)


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Doç. Dr. Huriye REİS


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Yukarıdaki imzaların adı geçen öğretim üyelerine ait olduğunu onaylarım.

Prof. Dr. İrfan ÇAKIN

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Dedicated to my niece, Nil TURALI, born 31.12.2009

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ÖZET

TURALI, Aydan. Ideology and Middle Class Values in Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*: An Althusserian Study, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2010.

Kraliçe Victoria'nın hüküm sürdüğü (1837-1901) ve Charles Dickens'ın romanlarını yazdığı dönemde İngiltere toplumu endüstri devriminin yol açtığı köklü ekonomik ve sosyal değişimlerden geçmiştir. Viktorya döneminde İngiliz soyluları ülke üzerindeki siyasi ve ekonomik gücünü kaybederken, orta sınıf ve değerleri toplumu etkilemeye başlamıştır. Bu değerler çok çalışmak, disiplin, katı ahlâk, saygınlık, hayırseverlik, yardımseverlik, aile değerleri, saygın bir yuvaya sahip olmak, din ve ailevî mutluluk olarak özetlenebilir.

Yukarıda bahsi geçen bütün değerlere, çoğu, halkın haftalık ve aylık bölümler halinde satın aldığı tefrika şeklinde yayımlanmış olan Dickens'ın romanlarında rastlanılabilir. Dickens çağının en popüler yazarlarından birisiydi ve bu sayede rahat bir orta sınıf yaşamı sürebildi. Bu yüzden hayatını kazanmak ve toplumsal statüsünü korumak için çoğunluğunu orta sınıf mensuplarının oluşturduğu okuyucu kitlesinin zevklerini ve fikirlerini yansıtmak zorunda olduğu söylenebilir. Bunun sonucunda, çocukluğunda yaşadıklarından dolayı çalışmalarında toplumsal eleştiriye rastlansa da, Dickens'ın romanlarının döneminin orta sınıfının değerlerini ve fikirlerini yansıttığı ve toplumsal eleştirisinin bile Viktorya döneminin baskın ideolojisinin değerleri tarafından şekillendiği söylenebilir.

Dickens'ın romanlarının ve toplum eleştirisinin ideoloji tarafından nasıl şekillendiği Fransız yapısalcı filozof Louis Althusser'in teorileri göz önünde bulundurulduğunda açıklığa kavuşmaktadır. Althusser için ideoloji bireyleri özne haline getiren temel güçtür. Althusser'e göre bireylerin öznenliği din, eğitim sistemi, aile, hukuk sistemi, siyaset sistemi, edebiyat, güzel sanatlar ve spor gibi Devletin İdeolojik Aygıtları tarafından oluşturulur.

Bu tezin amacı Charles Dickens'ın ve *Oliver Twist* (1837-39) ve *Great Expectations* (1860-61) adlı romanlarının dönemlerinin baskın orta sınıf ideolojisi tarafından nasıl

şekillendikleri ve bu ideolojiyi nasıl yansıttıklarını incelemektir. İlk bakışta bu iki roman, insanların toplum içinde bulundukları zor şartları eleştirir gibi gözükse de, Althusser'in teorileri ışığında gerçekleştirilen bu çalışma, bu romanların aslında Dickens'ın üyesi olduğu orta sınıfın ideolojisi tarafından şekillendiği ve bünyelerinde bu ideolojiyi barındırdığını tartışmaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler

Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, Louis Althusser, Ideoloji, Devletin İdeolojik Aygıtları, Viktorya Toplumu, Orta Sınıf.

ABSTRACT

TURALI, Aydan. Ideology and Middle Class Values in Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*: An Althusserian Study, MA Thesis, Ankara, 2010.

The period in which Queen Victoria ruled (1837-1901) and Charles Dickens wrote his novels is marked by enormous economic and social changes caused by the industrial revolution. During Queen Victoria's reign, the aristocracy in Britain lost its unquestionable political and economic power over the country, and the middle class and its values started to gain influence in society. These values can be summarised as hard work, strict (sexual) morality, respectability, charity, philanthropy, the importance of family, having a respectable home, religion, social upstanding and domestic happiness.

All of the values mentioned above can be found in Dickens's novels, most of which were published in serial form which the public bought in weekly and monthly installments. Dickens was one of the most popular writers of his time and this enabled him to lead a comfortable middle class life. Thus, it can be said that he had to reflect the taste and opinions of the reading public, which was mostly comprised of members of the middle class, to earn his living and sustain his social standing. Consequently, even though a fair amount of social criticism can be found in his works due to his childhood experiences, it can be said that his novels reflect the values and opinions of the middle class of his time and that even his social criticism is shaped by the values of the dominant ideology of Victorian times.

How Dickens's writing and social criticism was shaped by ideology becomes clear when one keeps in mind the theories of the French structuralist Louis Althusser for whom ideology is the main force shaping individuals into subjects. According to Althusser, individuals' subjectivities are constructed via Ideological State Apparatuses such as religion, the education system, the family, the judicial system, the political system, literature, the arts and sports.

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the way Charles Dickens and consequently his novels *Oliver Twist* (1837-39) and *Great Expectations* (1860-61), have been shaped by

and reflect the dominant middle class ideology of their time. It is argued that even though at first glance, it might seem that these two novels criticise the harsh conditions that society forced people to live in, further analysis under the light of Althusser's theories on ideology reveals that these novels are actually shaped by and embody the ideology of the middle class of which Dickens was a member.

Keywords

Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, Louis Althusser, Ideology, Ideological State Apparatuses, Victorian Society, the Middle Class.

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INTRODUCTION

The period in which Queen Victoria ruled (1837-1901) and in which Charles Dickens wrote his novels is marked by enormous economic and social changes caused by the Industrial Revolution. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, Great Britain was mainly a rural society, with its economy based on agricultural production. With the revolution, society gradually transformed into a largely urban one with manufacturing being transferred from farms and villages to giant factories established in urban centres. As Christina Crosby states,

the three great facts of [nineteenth century Britain] are capitalization, industrialization, and urbanization, the transformation of local and agrarian economies and ways of life into the modern world of steam and iron, metropolitan centers and worldwide interdependencies. (227)

As well as changes in the landscape of the country from a rural to an urban one, the nineteenth century also saw the rise of a new class – namely the middle class – who made use of the new opportunities opened up by the Industrial Revolution. With “their entrepreneurial zest and instinct for technological innovation” (Susman 247) the members of this class were able to make a fortune in industrial Britain. Their financial gains in turn brought them power within Britain, a power which before the Industrial Revolution belonged solely to the aristocracy. Furthermore,

[t]hat their power derived from wealth rather than from aristocratic birth, from the building of factories rather than the inheritance of land, created an entirely unprecedented form of power that challenged the traditional, hierarchical society into which most of them had been born. (Susman 247-48)

In other words, as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, the aristocracy in Britain lost its unquestionable political and economic power over the country, and the middle class and its values started to gain influence in society.

According to Gertrude Himmelfarb, “[v]alues [...] can be beliefs, opinions, attitudes, feelings, habits, conventions, preferences, prejudices, even idiosyncrasies—whatever any individual, group, or society happens to value, at any time, for any reason” (11-12). Since this new class had gained its position in society as a result of hard work and personal achievement as opposed to privilege and inheritance, this fact lay behind the values they upheld. As Asa Briggs argues in *The Age of Improvement, 1783-1867*, middle class values in the nineteenth century stressed “the gospel of work, ‘seriousness’ of character, respectability and self-help” (450). These values included hard work, strict (sexual) morality, respectability, charity, philanthropy, the importance of family, having a respectable home, religion, social upstanding and domestic happiness. In other words, “[i]t was not just hard work that mattered, but the moral character affiliated with it” (Bossche 88).

Furthermore, the reason that lies behind the importance given to hard work and strong morality among the middle class was the fact that there were two important influences on the development of middle class values in the nineteenth century: while the importance of work was shaped by the influence of Utilitarianism, the moral part of middle class values was shaped by Evangelicalism. James Eli Adams explains:

Under the leadership of William Wilberforce, the Evangelicals from roughly the 1780s sought to transform both British politics and everyday conduct by reinvigorating Christian piety, and approaching human life as an arena of constant moral struggle, of resistance to temptation and mastery of desire. (127)

Even though its origins lay in the late eighteenth century, Evangelicalism was a powerful influence throughout most of the nineteenth century. According to Russell M. Goldfarb, the reason behind this was the fact that children brought up within the Evangelical faith, became members of the middle class as adults:

People from all walks of life grew up under Evangelical training and then as adults in Victorian England they responded to a morality inculcated in childhood. For example, the captains of industry in the 1830’s, the new mill owners and factory owners who as children sang Wesleyan hymns in the rural and urban chapel, would as grown men move among lathes and spinning mules urging their workers to serve the Church, to save their souls, to discipline their lives. (23)

Comprising a large part of the influential middle class, the Evangelicals exerted their influence not only on the working class, but also on those above them in social rank which made it such a powerful force in the Victorian era. As Robin Gilmour argues: “Anglican evangelicalism became respectable and influential when it started to make converts among high society and the upper middle classes” (*Victorian* 72).

Even though not all Victorians agreed with the Evangelical faith, still they were influenced by the code of morality and reformation of manners it preached because according to the Evangelicals, “[t]he conduct of one’s daily life was of utmost importance in qualifying the soul for eternity. Every act, no matter how trivial in earthly terms, would be of inculcable importance when the balance was struck at the gates of Heaven” (Altick *Victorian* 166). In other words, due to the stress it lay on proper conduct, “[t]he Evangelical movement in the Church of England transformed the whole character of English society and imparted to the Victorian Age that moral earnestness which was its distinguishing characteristic” (Smyth 98).

In *Victorian People and Ideas*, Richard D. Altick explains the influence of Evangelicalism on all classes (174-5). The main reason behind its widespread influence lay in the fact that as the era wore on it developed from a mainly religious movement to one affecting personal and social morality (Altick *Victorian* 174). Additionally,

[i]n a nation riven by economic and social disparities, the widely accepted principles of moral Evangelicalism had a reconciling effect, bringing the classes together in what might be called an ethical democracy. Their often abrasive relations were eased by their possession of a common morality. (Altick *Victorian* 174)

Furthermore, Maurice J. Quinlan states the importance of Evangelicalism in the shaping of Victorianism: “Without imposing all its religious and moral teachings upon the nation, it swayed public opinion to support a rigorous code of conduct. And when public opinion became a strict arbiter of manners, Victorianism had arrived” (116).

The other major influence on Victorianism, Utilitarianism, on the other hand, argued “that social action should aim at producing ‘the greatest good for the greatest number’” (Harvie 436). In other words, the worth of any action was determined by its usefulness and the happiness it brings to the greatest number of people. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), the most important thinker of Utilitarianism argued that “[h]appiness [...] is [...] a matter of experiencing pleasure and lack of pain” (Sweet). While Evangelicalism shaped the conduct of people in their daily lives, the influence of Utilitarianism made itself felt mostly in the industrial activities of people, especially the members of the middle class:

Most broadly and loosely applied, [...] [Utilitarianism] refer[s] to the socio-economic-political ideology and set of values held by the Victorian middle class – to the entrepreneurial mentality which dominated the period and adopted these tenets to rationalize its actions and aims, habits and prejudices. (Altick *Victorian* 115)

As its influence grew, Utilitarianism became a major influence on the legal reforms enacted in the nineteenth century:

Starting from the belief that men are prompted in their behaviour by the desire to seek pleasure and to avoid pain, and that the purpose of all legislation should be to promote ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number’, Bentham founded a school of thought which, developing and changing in the hands of his disciples as the century progressed, provided a dynamic force of legal, social, political, and economic reform, and a touchstone for all governmental policies. (Thomson 30)

The first stages of the Utilitarian movement involved the adoption of the laissez-faire doctrines of Adam Smith (1723-90), and the simplification of the English legal system. In time the movement had its influence felt in all forms of governmental procedure and got transformed into a philosophy of legislative reform (Thomson 30).

Despite the fact that Bentham himself was against State regulation, his disciples “were in favour of it, wherever it could be applied in such a way as to procure the greatest happiness of the greatest number” (Cole 378). Since almost all Utilitarians were members of the middle and upper-middle class, the happiness they were after was usually in the interests of their own class. As John W. Osborne states, Utilitarianism

was essentially a middle-class movement with middle-class goals. It had the bourgeois aversion to tradition, hereditary aristocratic power, virtual

representation in parliament, sentimental obscurantism [...]. Its leaders were in general solidly in the middle ranks of society and although some of them advocated political democracy, they saw it only as a means of entrenching their own class in power. (53)

Even though the principles of Evangelicalism and Utilitarianism might seem contradictory, the Victorian middle class was able to reconcile a religious belief that put stress on morality, piety and resisting temptation with a philosophy that put stress on seeking happiness and avoiding pain. They were able to do this, Gilmour argues, because:

[t]here was security in a faith which gave assurance of salvation in the world to come, and a rule of daily life that encouraged stabilising qualities of self-discipline, hard work, sobriety, temperance of speech. [...] The paradox is that these were qualities also well suited to success in business, and so drew the Evangelical into the sphere of worldliness, laying him or her open to the charge of hypocrisy. [...] A stereotype of Victorian culture is the successful evangelical clergyman or businessman, sober-suited and serious, preaching the claims of another world while enjoying the fruits of this one. (*Victorian* 75)

Furthermore, Goldfarb explains the moral influence of Utilitarianism on the shaping of Victorian middle class values thus: “The Utilitarians were in many ways as powerful a moral force as the Evangelicals. Their ultimate aim was to develop a healthy society by appealing to the reason of men to pursue practical ends in life by practical means” (29). So “the revival of Evangelical Christianity” was able to “exist side by side in the middle classes with the new commercial spirit and a political economy of self-interest and unlimited competition” (Houghton 405).

Another reason behind the co-existence of the two movements was the fact that both Utilitarians and Evangelicals believed in the ethic of work as the principle means of achieving Earthly success, and for the Evangelicals, achieving heavenly reward as well (Altick *Victorian* 169). Adherents of both movements believed that

[h]appiness could be earned only through sustained labor and the sacrifice of immediate pleasure. So also to the Evangelical: the attainment of Heaven was a long-term proposition. By diligent application to one's earthly task, one accumulated money in the spiritual bank which would pay off later – how much later, only God could tell – in the accumulated capital, plus compound interest, of divine grace. (Altick *Victorian* 169)

Even though Utilitarianism aimed for ‘the greatest good for the greatest number’, the social reality of the age was quite different. While the factory owners gained immense wealth, the living conditions of the workers on whose labour they depended deteriorated. As the economy of the country came increasingly to depend on industrial production, immense number of people migrated from rural areas to the cities, searching for work. The lives of the workers were marked by long working hours and unsanitary and cramped living conditions with several families having to share a living space. As Quinlan states: “Although factory workers generally received higher wages than rural laborers, crowded tenements, the absence of health provisions, and the exploitation of child labor made for miserable conditions of life” (42). Samuel C. Chew and Richard D. Altick give details about how miserable these living conditions were:

[...] a large fraction of the populations of Liverpool, Manchester, and other towns lived in crowded cellars. The lack of sanitation of even the most rudimentary kinds was scandalous—the water-supply costly, inadequate, and often contaminated; proper means for the disposal of sewage and refuse non-existent; noisome graveyards in immediate proximity to the living. (1283)

Naturally, there emerged thinkers who were opposed to the new system and argued for change in society. The most notable of these thinkers was Karl Marx (1818-1883). Marx argued that the Industrial Revolution had polarised society into two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and that the system depended on the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie. As Frederick Engels, who co-authored *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) with Karl Marx, explains:

The present-day capitalist mode of production presupposes the existence of two social classes – on the one hand, that of the capitalists, who are in possession of the means of production and subsistence, and, on the other hand, that of the proletarians, who, being excluded from this possession, have only a single commodity for sale, their labour power, and who therefore have to sell this labour power of theirs in order to obtain possession of means of subsistence.... [P]resent-day bourgeois society, [...] [is] a grandiose institution for the exploitation of the huge majority of the people by a small, ever-diminishing minority. (71)

Marx traced the emergence of the proletariat to the end of the feudal system and the emergence of the industrial system. Even though for the bourgeois historians this

process emancipated labourers from the feudal lord, Marx saw it as another form of bondage. He explains this process with the following words:

[...] the historical movement which changes the producers into wage workers, appears, on the one hand, as their emancipation from serfdom and from the fetters of the guilds, and this side alone exists for our bourgeois historians. But, on the other hand, these new freedmen became sellers of themselves only after they had been robbed of all their own means of production, and of all the guarantees of existence afforded by the old feudal arrangements. And the history of this, their expropriation, is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire. (80)

Hence, the reality that produced both the wage labourer and the capitalist was “the servitude of the labourer.” The only change that occurred in the form of this servitude was from a feudal to a capitalist exploitation (Marx 81).

Even though the members of the working class are greater in number than those of the bourgeoisie, this exploitative system is not challenged by the former because

the role of capitalist property and class inequalities and consequent bourgeois methods of appropriation are hidden by the ideological view of capital circulation as “free” and “equal” exchange. Marx contended that the systematically unequal exchange between capitalists and workers (i.e., wages for labor power) is the most profoundly mystified social relation and most pivotal to capitalist accumulation. (Antonio 14)

This mystification works this way: “[R]uling classes [...] create ideologies that [...] [present] class exploitation [...] as a reflection of God, nature, or inherent right, and [thus] making it moral, inevitable and legal” (Antonio 22). Hence, the “political and cultural elites’ conscious, strategic efforts to distort reality and dominate” is the key of capitalist exploitation (Antonio 22).

Furthermore, according to Marx and Engels,

[t]he ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production, so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are on the whole subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the dominant

material relations grasped as ideas; hence of the relations which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. (60)

In other words, the ruling class uses ideology to establish and perpetuate its dominance over the proletariat.

A highly influential figure in the development of the theories of ideology is the French structuralist Louis Althusser (1918-1990). According to Althusser, there are no practices “except by and in ideology” (“Ideology” 170) and that individuals are born as “subjects” into some form of dominant ideology and cannot escape participation in the practices of that ideology (“Ideology” 170-183). For Althusser, “ideology is not merely an illusory representation of reality: it is the means through which people live their relation to reality” (McLellan 28). In Althusser’s words: “men *live* their actions, usually referred to as freedom and ‘consciousness’ by the classical tradition, in ideology, *by and through ideology*; in short, [...] the ‘lived’ relation between men and the world [...] passes through ideology, or better, *is ideology itself*” (emphasis in original) (*For Marx* 233). Influenced by Althusser, Michel Pecheux argues that “ideologies are not made up of ‘ideas’ but of practices” (142).

Furthermore, “Althusser developed the notion of ideological state apparatuses (or ISAs) in an attempt to both expand and clarify the meaning of the term ‘**ideology**’” (emphasis in original) (Sedgwick 187). These ISAs are institutions such as religion, the education system, the family, the judicial system, the political system, literature, the Arts and sports (Althusser, “Ideology” 143) through which “ideology functions to construct the **subjectivity** of individuals, and in so doing allocates them particular roles within the capital system of production” (emphasis in original) (Sedgwick 188).

Taking his cue from Marx, Althusser states that “the ruling ideology is [...] the ideology of the ruling class and that the former serves the latter not only in its rule over the exploited class, *but in its own constitution of itself as the ruling class*, by making it accept the lived relation between itself and the world as real and justified” (emphasis in original) (Althusser *For Marx* 235). In Marx’s terms, the system legitimates itself by mystifying the exploitative nature of the capitalist system as natural and unavoidable (Antonio 22).

Althusser traces the roots of the bourgeois ideology back to the eighteenth century “[w]hen [...] the ‘rising class’, the bourgeoisie, developed a humanist ideology of equality, freedom and reason, it gave its own demands the form of universality, since it hoped thereby to enroll at its side, by their education to this end, the very men it would liberate only for their exploitation” (*For Marx* 234). In other words, the education system “provided the trained, passive, and compliant workforce required by the capitalist enterprise” (Smith 54).

Another important concept proposed by Althusser is that of interpellation. In “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an investigation)” he states that

ideology ‘acts’ or ‘functions’ in such a way that it ‘recruits’ subjects among the individuals [...] or ‘transforms’ the individuals into subjects [...] by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: ‘Hey, you there!’ (emphasis in original) (174)

The example of the police given by Althusser makes sense when one keeps in mind the double meaning of the French verb *interpeller*. This French verb means “firstly to ‘call out to’ or ‘to shout at’ someone, and secondly ‘to question’ someone, especially in the sense that the police question or interrogate a suspect” (Ferretter 88). Thus,

the primary sense [of the term] is ‘to call out to’, as one person might call out to another in the street. The secondary connotation is that, since this is an act often performed by the police, in questioning a suspect, then, when ideology ‘calls out to’ a person, it is to ensure that law and order are maintained. (Ferretter 88)

Althusser’s claim that “ideology [...] ‘recruits’ subjects among the individuals [...] or ‘transforms’ the individuals into subjects [...] by [...] *interpellation*” (“Ideology” 174) is explained by Luke Ferretter:

Ideology addresses me, as it were, before I am even born, as I grow up and throughout my life, as an ‘I’, as a subject, as a site of identity, thought and action. [...] [I]deology calls me into being as subject, as if it were calling me by name in the street. It causes me to believe I am a subject, although in the reality of the capitalist mode of production, I have none of the attributes of that ideological concept. (89)

Thus, interpellation “‘hail[s] people into position’, making them understand [...] how their society works, and why; helping therefore, to make them into functioning members of their society” (Blake 20). By using ideology, interpellation creates for the individual the illusion that he/she is a unique subject. “Through ideology, Althusser remarks, society ‘interpellates’ or ‘hails’ us, appears to single us out as uniquely valuable and address us by name. [...] In thus ‘identifying’ us, beckoning us personally from the ruck of individuals and turning its face benignly towards us, ideology brings us into being as individual subjects” (Eagleton 214-5). In other words, interpellation

is a social process of address, talking in the name of a social group to an individual, telling her or him what exists in the world (e.g. nature, society, people), thus creating for the individual a sense of place and identity. Within this, it informs the individual what is good, just, right, beautiful, enjoyable, desirable and so on, thus structuring the individual’s desires. And it tells the individual what is possible and impossible, thereby structuring her or his hopes, ambitions and fears. (Blake 25)

Dominic Strinati gives concrete examples to explain how “ideology functions by turning individuals into subjects” (137). Some of the examples he gives are as follows:

a religion will place all individuals who participate in its material practices as subjects-believers – who are subject to one subject, God. Similarly, the ideology of political democracy will place individuals as citizens, that is subjects, who are subject to the sovereignty of parliament. Patriarchal ideology will interpellate individuals as more powerful men or less powerful women. Popular culture in contemporary societies might be argued to function by taking individuals and placing them as consumers, their subject status being defined by their consumption patterns. Likewise, it could be argued that the educational system serves first to place individuals as students in order to place them as workers and as members of social classes. (137)

In an attempt to explain Althusser’s theory of ideology Michael Freeden states that the ISAs “practised control over the ‘know-how’ that was necessary to secure repression and ensure the viability of the existing economic system” (25). Thus, for the Victorian middle class schooling and churches were the main ISAs to ensure the continuation of the system that benefited them. Girls were “taught by governesses, who had some 50,000 children in their charge in 1851 [...]; boys aged seven and older were increasingly likely to be boarders at preparatory or public schools” (Nelson 70). As ISAs, “schools helped to protect the national character” (Goldfarb 57). Additionally,

other ISAs shaping the Victorian child were “family upbringing, the restrictive nature of sex education, and the unmeasurable effect of growing up and living in a prudish society headed by a Queen who was a constant reminder of what that society stood for” (Goldfarb 57).

Althusser states that ISAs “must not be confused with the (repressive) State apparatus” (“Ideology” 142). He lists institutions such as “the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons” (“Ideology” 142-43) as constituting the Repressive State Apparatus (always referred to in singular form in his essay) which “functions ‘by violence’”, as opposed to the ISAs which “*function ‘by ideology’*” (emphasis in original) (“Ideology” 145). Furthermore, he distinguishes the Repressive State Apparatus from ISAs in terms of the domain they belong to. He argues that while “the [...] (Repressive) State Apparatus belongs [...] to the *public* domain, [...] Ideological State Apparatuses [...] are part [...] of the *private* domain” (emphasis in original) (“Ideology” 144). Thus during the nineteenth century while the police functioned as an important force in bringing about public order, other forces such as “the strength of the individual and family disciplines, many of them implanted at Sunday School, codes of conduct rather than laws” were even more important in the creation of well-behaved middle-class citizens (Briggs “The Later Victorian Age” 20). Walter E. Houghton’s argument about the Victorian era that “[p]eople adopted the conventions because from long training and habit they themselves were conventional” (396) demonstrates the important role of ISAs, and hence ideology, in shaping the “[t]he Victorian frame of mind” (Houghton 5).

The ideas introduced and developed by Marx and Althusser were influential on the development of British cultural studies, too. The British scholars who have contributed immensely to the emergence and growth of the field of cultural studies have put forth their theories under the influence of Marx and Althusser’s understanding of ideology. One of the most important of these scholars is Raymond Williams. Williams’s engagement with Marxism is mostly related to the concepts of ideology and hegemony. Since the main argument of this thesis is how ideology shapes subjects, how Williams and other scholars working within

and contributing to the theories of British cultural studies and to the various interpretations of the concept of ideology will be summarised below.

According to Williams, ideology is “an important concept in almost all Marxist thinking about culture, and especially about literature and ideas” (*Marxism* 55). He states that there are “three common versions of the concept [...] in Marxist writing”, which are:

- I. a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group;
- II. a system of illusory beliefs -- false ideas or false consciousness -- which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge;
- III. the general process of the production of meanings and ideas. (*Marxism* 55)

In the article entitled “Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory,” he puts forth the outline of his theory of society:

The theoretical model which I have been trying to work with is this. I would say first that in any society, in any particular period, there is a central system of practices, meanings and values, which we can properly call dominant and effective. This implies no presumption about its value. All I am saying is that it is central. [...] [W]hat I have in mind is the central, effective, and dominant system of meanings and values, which are not merely abstract but which are organized and lived. (157)

In other words, for Williams, the dominant ideology in society is not just an abstract concept, but a lived reality which organises the lives of its members. Furthermore, similar to Althusser’s understanding of education as an Ideological State Apparatus, Williams argues that “[t]he educational institutions are usually the main agencies of the transmission of an effective dominant culture” (“Base and Superstructure” 158). He puts forward the process he names “*selective tradition*” to indicate that within the dominant culture, there is a tradition that is “passed off as ‘*the tradition*’, ‘*the significant past*’” (emphasis in original) (“Base and Superstructure” 158). The purpose of this selectivity, according to Williams, is to emphasise the meanings and practices that justify the

position of the dominant culture in society. Again, recalling Althusser, Williams states that

[t]he processes of education; the processes of a much wider social training within institutions like the family; the practical definitions and organization of work; the selective tradition at an intellectual and theoretical level: all these forces are involved in a continual making and remaking of an effective dominant culture, and on them, as experienced, as built into our living, its reality depends. (“Base and Superstructure” 158)

As a result, this dominant ideology is not easily overthrown because it is not “merely an imposed ideology, [...] occupying merely the top of our minds,” but becomes what can be called the lived reality of the members of society (Williams “Base and Superstructure” 158).

In *The Making of the English Working Class*, Williams’s contemporary E.P. Thompson, writes about class in similar terms:

By class I understand a historical phenomenon, unifying a number of disparate and seemingly unconnected events, both in the raw material of experience and in consciousness. I emphasize that it is a *historical* phenomenon. I do not see class as a ‘structure’, nor even as a ‘category’, but as something which in fact happens [...] in human relationships. (9)

However contrary to the Althusserian tone of Williams’s thinking, Thompson’s outlook is much more humanist. As opposed to Althusser’s claim that “ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects” (“Ideology” 176), Thompson argues that as much as being formed by the external forces of the Industrial Revolution, the members of the working class have also played a role in their own formation. Even though he acknowledges the influence of the economic base on class, he emphasises the importance of experience in the formation of class-consciousness:

The class experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born – or enter involuntarily. Class-consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutional forms. (10)

Furthermore, opposing the strict deterministic viewpoint of structuralist Marxists, Thompson states that “class is a relationship, and not a thing” (11). In other words, he emphasises the importance of human agency within the concept of class:

The making of the working class is a fact of political and cultural, as much as of economic, history. It was not the spontaneous generation of the factory system. Nor should we think of an external force – the ‘industrial revolution’ – working upon some nondescript undifferentiated raw material of humanity, and turning it out at the other end as a ‘fresh race of beings’. The changing productive relations and working conditions of the Industrial Revolution were imposed, not upon raw material, but upon the free-born Englishman [...]. The factory hand or stockinger was [...] the inheritor of Bunyan, of remembered village rights, of notions of equality before the law, of craft traditions. He was the object of massive religious indoctrination and the creator of political traditions. The working class made itself as much as it was made. (213)

Another thing Thompson puts forth is his claim that class formation is a historical phenomenon:

The question [...] is how the individual got to be in [...] [his/her] ‘social role’, and how the particular social organization (with its property-rights and structure of authority) got to be there. And these are historical questions. If we stop history at a given point, then there are no classes but simply a multitude of individuals with a multitude of experiences. But if we watch these men over an adequate period of social change, we observe patterns in their relationships, their ideas, and their institutions. Class is defined by men as they live their own history. (11)

As a result, in the book Thompson sets out to write history from below, to give voice to those that have been traditionally excluded by the discipline of history. The reason behind this exclusion is the fact that the discipline of history has traditionally focused on the history of the dominant class. In his introduction to the book, Thompson states: “I am seeking to rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the ‘obsolete’ hand-loom weaver, the ‘utopian’ artisan [...] from the enormous condescension of posterity” (13). Throughout the book Thompson focuses on the daily lives, beliefs, attitudes and practices of the members of the working class to demonstrate how they have participated in the formation of their own culture during the process of industrialisation. In his attempt to include people from different classes he draws upon an egalitarian attitude which is quite important in the formation of discourses of ideology.

Another theorist who emerged during the time when Williams and Thompson were publishing their most influential work is Stuart Hall. As opposed to Williams and Thompson, however, Hall was enormously influenced by Althusser's work. According to Hall "ideology [is] [...] the mental frameworks – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works (26). By "systems of representation Hall means "the discourse of 'the market', the discourse of 'production', the discourse of 'the circuits'" which produce "a different definition of the system" (39). Echoing Althusser's concept of interpellation, Hall claims that each of these

locates us differently – as worker, capitalist, wage worker, wages slave, producer, consumer, etc. Each thus *situates us* as social actors or as a member of a social group in a particular relation to the process and prescribes certain social identities for us. The ideological categories in use, in other words, *position us* in relation to the account of the process as depicted in the discourse. (39-40) (Emphasis in original)

In other words, Hall approaches the concept of interpellation from the point of view of discourse and argues that it is through discourse that individuals are interpellated into their various subject positions.

As well as being influential on social studies, Althusser's theories also influenced literary studies, and this influence first made itself felt in his native France. In an essay entitled "On Literature as an Ideological Form", Althusser's students and disciples Etienne Balibar and Pierre Macherey write about the ideological nature of literature: "literature [...] does not 'fall from the heavens', the product of mysterious 'creation', but is the product of social practice [...]; it is not an 'imaginary' activity, although producing imaginary effects, but inescapably part of a material process" (37). Even though Balibar and Macherey's essay is mainly concerned with French literature, the quotation above is useful to clarify the relationship between the emergence of Great Britain as an industrial nation and the ties between literature and the development of the publishing industry. In other words, during the nineteenth century, the most developed industrial nation in the world was Great Britain, and the changes in nineteenth century Britain did not just occur in the area of manufacturing. There were immense changes

and technological advances in almost all areas of life, including the publishing of books, periodicals and newspapers. According to Gene H. Bell-Villada, “[t]he print market gained immeasurable powers through the industrialization of the book trade” and

[t]he actual print process showed dramatic technological advances. Iron rather than wood was adopted as basic material for printing machines, rendering them more resistant to stress. Manual operation gave way to foot-pedals and then to steam, leading to enormous increases in output. The fastest hand press could print 250 sheets per hour at most; by 1834 mechanical presses were printing 3,600 sheets per hour. (42)

As the advances in publishing made books and other printed materials cheaper to produce, their market increased at an unprecedented rate. According to John Holloway, the “annual output of published books more than quadrupled between 1840 and 1870” (87). The most popular literary form of the nineteenth century was fiction since as Altick argues in *The Presence of the Present: Topics of the Day in the Victorian Novel*,

The kind of literature that was most in demand was the kind that somehow reflected [...] the world [...] its readers knew best. In the image provided by fiction they learned about themselves. As a magazine contributor commented in 1871, “The education of novel-reading is the only kind of education that many even of the higher and middle-classes can be said to have.” (10)

One of the most popular novelists of the era was Charles Dickens and it can be argued that his popularity stemmed from the fact that he was able successfully to reflect the world his readers lived in. Most of Dickens’s novels were published in serial form which the reading public bought in weekly and monthly installments. In fact, serialisation was a popular form of publishing novels in the Victorian era since it “had the advantage to the reader of spreading the cost of a full-length work over many months” (Altick “Publishing” 295). “Serialization took two forms,” as Altick argues:

One was publication in magazines, which had often been used for printing minor fiction on the installment plan. The other was the part, or number, issue, which burst into view when it was employed for *Pickwick Papers* in 1836-7. Priced at an affordable shilling and sold over the counter like conventional periodicals, these monthly (less often, weekly), illustrated, thirty-two-page paperbound “parts” reached a large public that seldom if

ever ventured inside a bookshop. It was in this form that Dickens was catapulted to early fame, with the fifteenth number of *Pickwick* selling the then unearthly total of 40,000 copies. (“Publishing” 295)

There were many factors behind the enormous success of *The Pickwick Papers*. First of all, its “form and manner [...] heralded a revolution in the circulation and appeal of narrative fiction” (Ackroyd 190). Even though “the form itself was not a particularly new one,” before *Pickwick Papers* “such serialisation was really only employed for old and familiar tales like *The Pilgrim’s Progress*” (Ackroyd 190). Thus, “[w]hat was unfamiliar about Dickens’s venture was the idea of a *new* story being marketed in this way” (Ackroyd 190). Other than the serial format, the content of the work was also a novelty because with *The Pickwick Papers* Dickens’s enterprise was a new one, since “unsure as to exactly what type of work he was beginning, he did not feel constrained by literary etiquette and was able to include anything which occurred to him at the time” (Ackroyd 201). As a result, the work almost took the form of journals such as the *Penny Magazine* with “comic narrative, sentimental vignette and Gothic ‘horror’ jostling alongside each other” (Ackroyd 201). Hence, the novelty of the *Pickwick Papers*’ form contributed to its success as the reading public “realised that such a work did not have the conventional inhibitions of ordinary fiction” (Ackroyd 201).

In fact, *The Pickwick Papers* had become such a success that “in the fourth number there [...] appeared the ‘Pickwick Advertiser’, a section of advertisements placed in front of the main text like advertisements in a newspaper” (Ackroyd 207). At first only books were advertised in this section, however as the work’s popularity grew,

by the ninth number there were more pages of advertisement (some thirty-nine) than pages of text (thirty-one). The range of the advertisements had also widened from the merely literary, and now included Rotterdam Corn and Bunion Solvent, Simpson’s new Antibilious Pill, a gentleman’s water-proof cloak [...] and [...] Rowlands’s Macassar Oil. (Ackroyd 207)

With *The Pickwick Papers*, Dickens captured the interest of readers from all walks of life. The work was enjoyed not only by middle or upper-middle class readers, but also by those belonging to the lower class. An anecdote, upon visiting a locksmith, by one of Dickens’s first biographers illustrates the rapport Dickens had created with his

audience: “I found him reading *Pickwick* [...] to an audience of twenty persons, literally, men, women and children” the biographer states (qtd. in Ackroyd 208) and Ackroyd states that the novel

was hired by them all for twopence a day from the circulating library, because they could not afford a shilling for the monthly number, and the observer never forgot how these humble people, who themselves could not read, laughed with Sam Weller and cried with “ready tears” at the death of the poor debtor in the Fleet prison. This was the audience which Charles Dickens had found – not only the judges and the doctors, but the labouring poor. By some miracle of genius he had found a voice which penetrated the hearts of the high as well as of the low. Truly he had created a national audience. (208)

In other words, he was able to create a national audience because “he [...] shared with it, not only familiar details which were there for all to see, but also a moral mood fairly diffused among those who could buy or borrow the precious numbers as they came out” (House 46). House calls this “moral mood” “Dickens benevolence” and lists its “main symptoms” (46). The first symptom of this kind of benevolence is “[g]enerosity, in money, and in kindness that costs nothing. Both kinds of generosity are chiefly shown by the poor towards each other and by the benevolent well-to-do towards the poor” (House 46). Thus, the reason behind the popularity of Dickens’s books among both the members of the lower classes and more affluent classes was the fact that his books illustrated one of the most important tenets of their morality, namely showing generosity towards one’s neighbours and those who are less fortunate.

The second symptom of “Dickens benevolence” listed by House is “[a]n acute feeling for suffering in all forms, whether caused by poverty, sickness, cruelty (mental or physical) or injustice. The feeling becomes most acute when all these causes of suffering are combined in the sufferer, and there is somebody who has power to relieve them all” (46). So the audience of the *Pickwick Papers* mentioned above by Ackroyd “cried with ‘ready tears’ at the death of the poor debtor in the Fleet prison” (208). In fact Chew and Altick argue that “Dickens, knowing that his readers enjoyed a ‘good cry,’ made it his practice to wring the last possible tear from a situation” (1347). He was able to do this mainly by painting “a vivid picture of working class folk whose poverty

could be seen not as a penalty from heaven or the punishment of sin, but as the product of bad social conditions and the consequence of man's inhumanity" (Thomson 114).

As Dickens's example illustrates, as opposed to the writers of the previous centuries, who depended on the patronship of wealthy aristocrats to continue practising their art, writers of the Victorian era depended on the purses of the novel buying public for their livelihood and "[s]erialization brought novelists closer to their audiences and made them more responsive to their expectations than ever before" (Altick "Publishing" 296). Since the majority of this audience was comprised of members of the middle class, writers had to reflect their values in order to retain their readership and sell their work. As Goldfarb states,

Publishers, editors, sometimes booksellers did not want to offend pressure groups or customers by dealing with morally questionable literature. [...] Editors of [...] magazines paid generously for material they used; they could not afford the risk of losing circulation by offending the moral consciousness of large segments of their reading public. (32)

In fact, Quinlan claims that "the most striking characteristic of the reading public was its strong disapproval of indelicacy" (272). As a result, "[c]ontemporary writers had learned to comply with the strict demands of the reading public, and no reputable publisher would have dared print a book which dealt with indecorous situations or contained gross language" (Quinlan 272). The fact that reading for pleasure and reading aloud in the family circle had become a favourite Victorian middle-class pastime thanks to the introduction of oil and gas lamps which made it possible "to spend [...] evening[s] [...] at home with a book, or to join the domestic circle [...] to hear one member of the family read to the others" and "no father wanted to stumble upon coarse or indelicate expressions when reading aloud to his daughters" (Quinlan 244-45) was another factor in the growing delicacy in literature during Victorian times.

Another influential force in the Victorian publishing industry was the circulating library, chief among which was that of Charles Edward Mudie's. At first, Mudie's catered mainly to people who could not afford to pay large sums of money for "expensive three-deckers" – as three volume novels were commonly called during the nineteenth century – by "len[ding] a volume at a time for a fee of a guinea a year per

reader” (Wheeler 2). As his business expanded, however, Mudie began to hold a powerful position within the Victorian book trade, and he “acted as an unofficial defender of public morals” (Wheeler 3). Additionally, Mudie’s customers wanted novels to confirm to the ideas they held which the librarian supplied:

Mudie’s subscriber was keenly interested in ideas, and enjoyed the disquisitions which nine hundred pages allowed authors. The ideas in the novels, however, he expected not to differ radically from his own firmly established beliefs. He was interested in religion, for example, but he liked to see the Catholic or the atheist in his novel converted to Protestantism, and he was pleased to find the reformed rake hard at work in the colonies bringing his religion to others. His wife and daughters were more interested in the romantic plots perhaps, but he had no fears that Mudie would circulate any book which might be harmful or even embarrassing to read aloud in the family circle. (Griest 221)

Consequently, due to the censorship powers of Mudie, what began as a cheap alternative to buying expensive volumes, gradually became a sign of prestige and moral upstanding in middle class homes. As Altick states, “the conspicuous presence of ‘books from Mudie’s’ in a home was a token of genteel social standing, if not necessarily of discriminating taste” (“Publishing” 293). Mudie’s had exerted such an influence within the publishing trade that by the middle of the nineteenth century “[a] listing in Mudie’s selection had become one of the best advertisements for any novel” (Griest 20). As a result of the large amount of orders he made for expensive three-decker novels, he became such an important force in the publishing world that

his orders for material profoundly affected the literary world, and yards of stuff, printed in the prescribed pattern and in approved colors, were carefully produced. The length he preferred, the plots he enjoyed, the subjects he approved, the attitudes he endorsed, were perpetuated in the pages of the elaborately bound volumes lining his shelves. (Griest 36)

In fact, most of the time, due to their expense, the libraries were the only purchasers of three-decker novels, proven by the fact that in the advertisements they gave to journals, “publishers might simply state that new novels were ‘ready at every library’. [...] No appeal for actual purchase was made; on the contrary the reader was urged to borrow, to ‘[a]sk at the libraries’” (Griest 62).

Thus, there were many forces at work in the publishing trade of the Victorian era, and it can be argued that all of them had the one common characteristic of being shaped and influenced by middle class values and ideology. Since the middle class ideology and its values were deeply ingrained within the individual's "frame of mind" it was important for authors who wanted to be successful to keep in mind this ideology and its values when writing their books. As a result, "the Victorian *mentalité* – the common fund of information, opinions, assumptions and idea- and value-structures – was manifested in the product of the novelists set before their public" (Altick *Presence* 2) and Dickens was not indifferent to this system of production. In fact, a commentator in *Blackwood's* magazine stated this fact as early as 1852: "middle-class respectability [...] fills the books of Mr. Dickens" (qtd. in House: 152). In his books "everything was written with an eye on decency, and he himself worked by the rule [...] that there should be nothing in his books unfit for a Young Person" (House 215).

This desire to appeal to a middle class audience and be a part of that same class was a desire that ran through Dickens's life. The ambiguous gap between him as the writing Subject in the nineteenth century and the dominant ideological codes of the age he strongly defended in his novels was narrowed. Hence despite the difficulties he had during childhood, Dickens can be evaluated as the mouthpiece of the ruling ideological discourse due to his attempts in his satire to construct ideal, correct and just situations . When he was twelve years old his father was imprisoned for his debts. Shortly before his imprisonment, Dickens was taken from school and sent to work in a blacking factory, a fact he kept a secret from everyone except his close friend Forster all his life. "I have never, until I now impart it to this paper, in any burst of confidence with anyone, my own wife not excepted, raised the curtain I then dropped, thank God" he wrote to Forster years later (qtd. in Forster 1: 33).

Even though he managed to keep this part of his life a secret, it in fact left an indelible mark on him. After he became a famous author he wrote bitterly about the experience in an autobiographical fragment which he intended to be published after his death:

It is wonderful to me how I could have been so easily cast away at such an age. It is wonderful to me that, even after my descent into the poor little drudge I had been since we came to London, no one had compassion

enough on me – a child of singular abilities: quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt, bodily or mentally – to suggest that something might have been spared, as certainly it might have been to place me at any common school. [...] No one made any sign. My father and mother were quite satisfied. They could hardly have been more so, if I had been twenty years of age, distinguished at a grammar-school, and going to Cambridge. (qtd. in Forster 1: 21)

Throughout the time he spent at the blacking factory, he felt himself superior to other boys and men with whom he worked: “I worked, from morning to night, with common men and boys. [...] Though perfectly familiar with them, my conduct and manners were different enough from theirs to place a space between us. They, and the men, always spoke of me as ‘the young gentleman’” he wrote in the same autobiographical fragment quoted above (qtd. in Forster 1: 25-26).

The reason he felt “cast away” when he was sent to work in the blacking factory can be explained in his ambition he had since childhood of becoming a gentleman and living in a big house. This ambition was in fact instilled in him by his father. Before they moved to London, they used to live in Rochester and near Rochester was a big house called Gad’s Hill Place which his father used to point out as an example of the kind of life he could have and the kind of house he could live in “if he could only work hard enough” and this “for a long time was his ambition” (Forster 1: 5). In fact his father held similar ambitions which he probably imparted to his son. As Ackroyd comments, his father was

brought up in the purlieu of a rich and respectable family – the son of a servant but nonetheless it is clear from everything recorded about him that he suffered from no visible sense of inferiority as a result. Quite the contrary; whether out of insecurity or resentment or plain imitation, he carried himself as a gentleman, dressed fashionably as a gentleman and always insisted upon being treated as a gentleman. His accent must have been trained early in life – there was no sense in which he was what was called low – and he grew up in an environment which paid no little respect to all the special proprieties and in particular to book-learning. (9-10)

Thus, the desire to become a gentleman and lead a gentleman’s life passed from father to son and it can be argued that this desire to live a genteel life made his father live beyond his means and brought about his eventual imprisonment for debt.

His father’s imprisonment came to an end when his brother was able to pay off his debt with the help of a sum of money left to them after their mother’s death (Ackroyd 89).

Despite his father's release from prison, Dickens was not immediately taken from the blacking warehouse. He continued to work in the warehouse until a quarrel between his father and the owner caused the latter to end Dickens's employment there (Forster 1: 32). He was finally able to continue his education after leaving the warehouse. His parents enrolled him in a neighbourhood school called "Wellington House Academy, which enjoyed a good reputation in its locality, and [...] was cited by [Matthew] Arnold as 'the type of our ordinary middle class schools'" (Collins *Education* 113). However, he remained there only two years and was forced to leave when he was fifteen years old due to his father's financial trouble repeating itself.

In contrast to the bitterness he expressed about being forced to work in the blacking factory, he never voiced any resentment about his education coming abruptly to an end. This lack of resentment can perhaps be explained as a result of his eagerness to enter the world of business and make something of himself which he encouraged his own sons to do. As Ackroyd states: "he seems never to have regretted not attending a university and [...] he showed no great inclination for his own children to do so – he seems to have preferred that they left school young and went into 'business' or some allied worldly pursuit" (122).

During this time, his father was working as a reporter in the parliament and under his influence, Dickens "took sudden determination to qualify himself [...] [to] become [...] a newspaper parliamentary reporter. He set resolutely therefore to the study of shorthand; and [...] became an assiduous attendant in the British Museum reading-room" (Forster 1: 45). In other words, he was a self-made man, to employ a popular nineteenth century term. Forster describes the success of his self-education with these words: "No man who knew him in later years, and talked to him familiarly of books and things, would have suspected his education in boyhood, almost entirely self-acquired as it was, to have been so rambling or haphazard" (1: 45). A letter Forster received from one of Dickens's old schoolmates from Wellington House Academy confirms his judgement: "Depend on it he was quite a self-made man, and his wonderful knowledge and command of the English language must have been acquired by long and patient study after leaving [Wellington House Academy]" (qtd. in Forster 1: 41).

After working briefly as a reporter, he set about writing his first work, *Sketches by Boz*, whose success launched his career as a successful and prolific writer. His prolificness was a result of his work ethic which caused him to work endlessly, sometimes on more than one novel at a time and usually under the pressure of a deadline. According to Forster, “he never wrote without the printer at his heels; [...] the more urgent the call upon him the more readily he rose to it” (1: 100).

As his career as a writer developed, so did his sense of business acumen as a result of the experience of the unfairness of his deal with his first publishers. He came to the realisation that he had signed a deal that was not favourable to him when he did not profit from the huge success of *Oliver Twist* as much as he should have. He voiced his resentment in a letter to Forster:

The immense profits which *Oliver* has realised its publisher, and is still realising; the paltry, wretched, miserable sum it brought to me (not equal to what is every day paid for a novel that sells fifteen hundred copies at most); the recollection of this, and the consciousness that I have still the slavery and drudgery of another work on the same journeyman-terms; the consciousness that my books are enriching everybody connected with them but myself, and that I, with such a popularity as I have acquired, am struggling in old toils, and wasting my energies in the very height and freshness of my fame, and the best part of my life, to fill the pockets of others. (qtd. in Forster 1: 93)

As well as rethinking his deal with his publishers, he also set about establishing a periodical as a vehicle for the publication of his future work which he launched in 1850 with this address to readers:

We aspire to live in the Household affections, and to be numbered among the Household thoughts, of our readers. We hope to be the comrade and friend of many thousands of people, of both sexes, and of all ages and conditions, on whose faces we may never look. We seek to bring into innumerable homes, from the stirring world around us, the knowledge of many social wonders, good and evil, that are not calculated to render any of us less ardently persevering in ourselves, less tolerant of one another, less faithful in the progress of mankind, less thankful for the privilege of living in the summer-dawn of time. (qtd. in Andrews 16-17)

In *Household Words* and its successor *All The Year Round*, Dickens practised strict editorial control and “he vehemently insisted that his contributors should express, or at least not contradict, his own opinions on social issues” (Collins *Crime* 12). Like most members of the middle class, these opinions were influenced by the Victorian ideology shaped by the effects of Evangelicalism and Utilitarianism. His readers were in agreement with the ideas propounded in the journals he edited and the morals he put forward in his fictional work. As A. O. J. Cockshut argues, “there was little, if anything, in Dickens’s moral appeal that was not wholeheartedly accepted by his readers. He asked for honesty, justice and mercy; and he understood these words, just as his readers did, in terms ultimately based on Christian ethics” (53). He was also a believer in the Victorian domestic ideology based on the principle of separate spheres. This ideologically correct status of women was best described at the time in Sarah Stickney Ellis’s 1839 book *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits*:

According to this ideology as Ellis formulates it, “to men belongs the potent [...] consideration of worldly aggrandizement.” They operate in the professions, governmental services, and the world of business and industry to acquire property, advance themselves, and improve the material condition of their wives and families. The world in which they move is seen to be dominated by “inborn selfishness,” temptation, and vice. Women, by contrast ensconced in the domestic sphere, are understood to be “clothed in moral beauty” – selfless, disinterested, and spiritually pure by “nature.” They are protected against worldly evils and possess a “secret [moral] influence” that can correct men’s missteps. Ellis and like-minded thinkers [...] assumed that a woman’s goal in life was marriage and her vocation to bear and raise children. (qtd. in Harrison 30)

The culmination of this ideal of the domestic woman was the image of “The Angel in the House”, so called after Coventry Patmore’s poem of the same name which was published in 1854. An article, written by Dickens and published in *Household Words* on November 1851, idealises this figure and puts forward that the only proper place for women is in the home:

Personally, we admit that our mind would be disturbed, if our own domestic well-spring were to consider it necessary to entrench herself behind a small table ornamented with a water-bottle and tumbler, and from that fortified position to hold forth to the public.... We should put the question thus to Mrs. Bellows. ‘Apple of our eye, we will freely admit your inalienable right to step out of your domestic path into any phase of public appearance and palaver that pleases you best; but we doubt the wisdom of such a sally.

Beloved one, does your sex seek influence in the civilised world? Surely it possesses influence therein to no mean extent, and has possessed it since the civilised world was. Should we love our Julia (assuming for the sake of argument, the Christian name of Mrs. Bellows to be Julia), – should we love our Julia better, if she were a Member of Parliament, a Parochial Guardian, a High Sheriff, a Grand Juror, or a woman distinguished for her able conduct in the chair? Do we not, on the contrary, rather seek in the society of our Julia, a haven of refuge from Members of Parliament, Parochial Guardians, High Sheriffs, Grand Jurors, and able chairmen? Is not the home-voice of our Julia as the song of a bird, after considerable bow-wow-ing out of doors? And is our Julia certain that she has a small table and water-bottle Mission round the corner, when here are nine (say, for the sake of argument, nine) little Bellowses to mend, or mar, at home? (qtd. in Andrews 14).

This article reflects Dickens's belief in the idea of "separate spheres" mentioned above. To elaborate, the basis of this idea was that men and women belong to and operate in two separate worlds: "the masculine public sphere of work, the private female sphere of domesticity, the competitive realm of business, the moralized space of the home" (Susman 246). To explain this doctrine more clearly, men "operate in the professions, governmental services, and the world of business and industry to acquire property, advance themselves, and improve the material condition of their wives and families" (Harrison 30). Women, on the other hand, live "in the domestic sphere" where "they are protected against worldly evils" (Harrison 30) and "therefore [can] serve as moral guides" for men (Bossche 91). Even though in novels and articles of the time – such as the one from Dickens quoted above – which exemplified the "separate spheres" ideology, the category of "woman" was used as a general term which comprised all women, in reality this ideology was basically a middle class one since most working class women could not afford to stay at home and be "angels in the house".

As mentioned above, according to Althusser all human practices are made "by and in ideology" ("Ideology" 170) and individuals are born as "subjects" into some form of dominant ideology in whose practices they cannot help but participate ("Ideology" 170-183). Thus, as the child of a father who aspired to be a member of the middle class and an adult who managed to become a member of the Victorian middle class through his success as a writer who appealed to that very class, Dickens participated in and reflected Victorian middle class ideology in his writings.

In his novel *Oliver Twist*, the protagonist “makes a lengthy odyssey from workhouse to undertaker’s establishment to thieves’ den before finally achieving the middle-class security and affection that are his birthright” (Nelson 79). In fact even though he is born and brought up in a workhouse and spends time among criminals, Oliver never gets corrupted because he turns out to be the son of a gentleman. As will be discussed below at length in relation to its manifestation in Dickens’s novel *Great Expectations*, the figure of the gentleman was an important one for middle class ideology as he embodied all the moral virtues upheld by Victorian society. Even Oliver’s speech is a reflection of his true ancestry. In the workhouse almost everyone around him, including government officials such as the beadle speak with accents, but somehow Oliver never picks up their way of speaking and manages to speak perfect English throughout the novel.

It can be stated that in the novel Dickens demonstrates that Oliver’s gentle birth protects him from corruption which is a reflection of the Victorian emphasis on the importance of belonging to a good family. This fact was recognised even during Dickens’s own lifetime as his friend and biographer Forster’s comment about the novel shows: “It is indeed the primary purpose of the tale to show its little hero, jostled as he is in the miserable crowd, preserved everywhere from the vice of its pollution by an exquisite delicacy of natural sentiment which clings to him under every disadvantage” (1: 90). In fact Dickens himself stated his intention as being “to show, in little Oliver, the principle of Good surviving through every adverse circumstance” (“Author’s Preface” 111).

It should not be understood from what is stated above that Dickens depicts the vice and vulgarity of Oliver’s companions without censure. On the contrary, he takes great care not to include anything that might offend his middle class readers and prevent the book from being read aloud in the family circle. As Dickens himself states in his preface to the novel: “No less consulting my own taste, than the manners of the age, I endeavoured, while I painted it in all its fallen and degraded aspects, to banish from the lips of the lowest character I introduced, any expression that could by possibility offend” (“Author’s Preface” 113). In other words, while writing the novel he always kept in mind the expectations and beliefs of his audience because he shared those expectations and beliefs on account of being shaped by the same ideology.

The other novel examined in this thesis, *Great Expectations*, is a *bildungsroman* tracing the life of Pip from his childhood in the English countryside to his coming into a legacy, and going to London to become a “gentleman.” Victorian gentlemen were the embodiment of Victorian values such as morality, respectability and social upstanding. However, Pip’s “great expectations” of becoming a gentleman ends with failure because it lacked one very important Victorian virtue: hard work. In other words because his efforts to become a gentleman were financed not by his own efforts, but by money given to him by a convict, they failed since, for the Victorians, as Harold Perkin argues, “The true gentleman [. . .] was the entrepreneurial ideal of the self-made man” (278). Thus, it can be stated that *Great Expectations* is a reflection of Dickens’s belief in the Victorian ideology of hard work and being satisfied with one’s place in life. Pip finally becomes a true Victorian gentleman by working hard and becoming a partner in a respectable company.

To sum up, these two novels demonstrate the Victorian belief that in order to become a respectable member of society, one either has to be born into gentility and become one of its subjects or earn it through hard work. While *Oliver Twist* is rewarded with a middle class life due to his father’s gentlemanly status and his own innate moral goodness, Pip is rewarded in the end by learning the value of hard work and finally attaining the hand of Estella when he becomes a true gentleman, that is, a self-made one. This thesis will analyse these novels in detail in the light of Althusser’s theories of ideology, ISAs and interpellation and demonstrate that while portraying his characters, Dickens creates subjects shaped and controlled by the Victorian ideology.

CHAPTER I:

***OLIVER TWIST*: INTERPELLATION OF OLIVER INTO HIS RIGHTFUL MIDDLE CLASS POSITION**

Dickens's novel *Oliver Twist* was first published serially in *Bentley's Miscellany* in 1837 with the subtitle "The Parish Boy's Progress." As this subtitle suggests, Dickens's intention was at first to relate what it was like to be a "parish boy" in the aftermath of the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 (Glancy 41). The poor law that this Act amended had its roots in the Tudor and especially the Elizabethan era. Why the sudden need for laws dealing specifically with the plight of the poor? The need mainly arose from the increase in the number of the poor due to the changes society – especially in the rural areas – went through as a result of enclosure acts. "Two thousand or so enclosure acts involved the loss of centuries-old common rights of grazing and gathering vital to the economy of the poor" (Kidd 14). Furthermore,

[t]he situation for the agricultural labourer was exacerbated by two further developments. First, a decline in the availability of allotments on which food could be grown to supplement wage income. Second, the decay of cottage industries, especially those of hand-spinning and weaving, in the face of competition from mechanised production in factory towns. (Kidd 14)

As the agricultural labourer found their situation intolerable their only solution was to seek work elsewhere that would pay enough for the subsistence of themselves and their families. However, the era saw this as another problem as 'strangers' flocked to their communities seeking work. These wandering people were defined as vagrants and the Tudor laws dealing with the poor were mainly drawn up as a result of the 'problem' of vagrancy. As Paul Slack argues,

when the Tudors first engaged with the problem of the poor [...] [t]heir concern was political security and their target the vagabond. At the outset of his reign Henry VII ordered local searches for wanderers and 'suspect persons', and in 1495 a Vagrancy Act provided that they were to be set in the stocks for three days and then sent home. (115)

This Act was followed with another one in 1531 which

simplified the punishment of vagrants. [...] Vagabonds were [...] to be whipped, [...] and then returned to the place where they were born or where they last lived for at least three years. The qualification for settlement was reduced to one year in 1598, but otherwise this remained the usual medicine for vagrancy throughout the period. (Slack 118)

As mentioned before, the roots of the Poor Law Amendment Act lay especially in the statutes concerning the situation of the poor that were passed during the Elizabethan era. There were various reasons behind the concern the Elizabethans felt for the situation of the poor. According to J. A. Sharpe,

[t]he first was fear: if the poor were not relieved, they might rise in desperation. The second was a notion that the poor would benefit themselves, and perhaps benefit others, if they were employed usefully: a notion probably not unconnected with the ever-developing capitalism of the period. The third, and perhaps most widespread, was a feeling that the better-off should do something for their less fortunate brethren. (220)

According to the Elizabethan poor law, it was the “responsibility of each parish to maintain the ‘impotent’ and to provide work for the able-bodied under the supervision of the overseers of the poor. Finance was raised by the churchwardens, who increasingly relied upon an annual poor rate” (Dauntton 447). People were mostly willing to pay this rate without question because

there was a broad identity between ratepayers and the recipients of relief: the fundamental point about relief to the impotent poor is that most families would at some time turn to the parish for assistance. Perhaps as many as 25 per cent of households had some relief in the course of the year, accounting for about 15 per cent of the population; and 10 per cent of households and 5 per cent of the population had regular relief. These recipients were not a separate, marginal group in society, for old age and ill-health or widowhood were ever-present threats to everyone. The ratepayers, churchwardens, and overseers of the poor were not providing a system of relief for a distinct and despised class; they were themselves likely to turn to the parish at some stage in their life-cycle, and generosity and self-interest were one and the same. (Dauntton 452)

The final Elizabethan law dealing with the situation of the poor was passed in 1601 and came to be known as ‘the 43rd Elizabeth’ because it was passed during the 43rd year of the Queen’s reign (Inglis 44). According to Brian Inglis, “The 43rd Elizabeth was based on two simple principles: the right to work – or, rather, the duty of society to provide

work for anybody who needed it and was capable of doing it; and the right to subsistence, for those who could not work through old age or infirmity” (44). To carry out the collection of rates which were to fund the forms of relief that the law outlined, “‘overseers of the poor’ [...] [were] appointed in each parish, under the general direction of the Justices of the Peace” (Bruce 29).

The 43rd Elizabeth “remain[ed] the basis of the English poor law for over three centuries”, that is, until the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 (Inglis 44). In 1832 a seven-member Royal Poor Law Commission was appointed by the government (Boyer 199). There were two reasons “for the formation of the Royal Poor Law Commission: fear of rising poor rates, and the agricultural laborers’ revolt of 1830-1” (Boyer 195). There was increase belief among rate payers that “the system of outdoor relief caused poor relief expenditures to increase over time” (Boyer 195-6). On the other hand,

[l]andowners viewed the riots as a strong signal that the local administration of poor relief was badly mismanaged. The increase in real relief expenditures after 1817 had increased rather than reduced the discontent of agricultural laborers. The laborers’ demands and the response of tenant farmers suggested that relief expenditures (or wage rates) were about to increase even more, and that the landowners would be expected to bear much of the increase in the form of reduced rents. It was time for the government to intervene to reduce relief expenditures and to increase the power of landowners in parish vestries. (Boyer 198-99)

Thus, increasing pressure from rate payers caused the government to appoint a commission to respond to these demands and to investigate whether outdoor relief was really causing expenditures to increase. The Poor Law Commission completed its work and presented its findings to the Parliament. Based on this report, The Poor Law Amendment Act was formulated and accepted in Parliament in 1834. According to John Briggs et.al.,

[T]he New Poor Law embraced the two principles of the Workhouse Test and Less Eligibility. The first meant, in theory, an end to all outdoor relief, the only relief offered being in the workhouse. The second required that conditions in the house should be less attractive than those enjoyed by the least well-off independent labourer. (115)

In the words of the commission's report:

his [the recipient of relief] situation on the whole shall not be made really or apparently so eligible as the situation of the independent labourer of the lowest class.... [I]n proportion as the condition of any pauper class is elevated above the condition of independent labourers, the condition of the independent class is depressed; their industry is impaired, their employment becomes unsteady, and its remuneration in wages are diminished. Such persons, therefore, are under the strongest inducements to quit the less eligible class of labourers and enter the more eligible class of paupers.... Every penny bestowed, that tends to render the condition of the pauper more eligible than that of the independent labourer, is a bounty on indolence and vice. (qtd in Boyer 64)

So the main motive behind the Poor Law Amendment Act was heavily influenced by Utilitarianism since the latter emphasised that the main cause of human actions was the seeking of pleasure and avoidance of pain. The conditions in the workhouse would be made less attractive “not through poor food or harsh living conditions in the workhouse [...], but through hard labour and ‘strict discipline’ which would be ‘intolerable to the indolent and disorderly’” (Kidd 28). The ‘strict discipline’ emphasised uniformity and discipline, a monotonous routine, useless task-work and the segregation of inmates (Kidd 34). When an able-bodied male entered the workhouse as a last resort, he took his family with him, thus segregation meant the separation of families inside the workhouse. The inmates were to be divided into seven classes according to age and sex, and housed separately:

1. Aged or infirm men.
2. Able-bodied men and youths aged over 13 years.
3. Youths and boys aged over seven and under 13 years.
4. Aged or infirm women
5. Able-bodied women and girls aged over 16 years.
6. Girls aged over seven and under 16 years.
7. Children aged under seven years. (Kidd 34-5)

Another amendment that the new Act made was in the administrative system of the law. There was to be established a Central Board to oversee the application of the Poor Law, which would be supported by assistant commissioners. Furthermore, parishes were grouped together into unions and a workhouse were to be built in each union (Kidd 28).

Following this decision, “[t]he 15 000 parishes of England and Wales were to be grouped together into some 600 Poor Law Unions” (Kidd 29).

As can be seen, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 brought drastic changes to the way the country dealt with its poor and needy. Before the advent of industrialisation brought drastic changes to the makeup of society, caring for those in need was seen as a Christian duty by the people. However, as industrialisation changed England from a mostly agricultural country to a mostly industrial one, people started viewing those on relief with suspicion. Thus, the New Poor Law laid emphasis on relieving only the sick, the infirm, the old and children, and withholding aid from those it viewed as able-bodied and thus capable of working to support themselves.

Even though the satire in *Oliver Twist* is mainly targeted at the effects of the Poor Law Amendment Act, Dickens “was no lover of the Old Poor Law either” (Cunningham 164). In fact, “*Oliver Twist* was born under the Old Poor Law, and is presented to us in chapter 2 under the New. Both lack humanity, and it is to humanity that Dickens appeals in his critique” (Cunningham 164). In the Postscript he wrote to *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens voiced his view on the Poor Law with these words:

I have been called upon to admit that I would give Poor Law relief to anybody, anywhere, anyhow. Putting this nonsense aside, I have observed a suspicious tendency in the champions to divide into two parties; the one contending that there are no deserving Poor who prefer death to slow starvation and bitter weather, to the mercies of some Relieving Officers and some Union Houses; the other admitting that there are such Poor, but denying that they have any cause or reason for what they do. The records in our newspapers [...] and the common sense and senses of common people, furnish too abundant evidence against both defences. But, that my view of the Poor Law may not be mistaken or misrepresented, I will state it. I believe there has been in England, since the days of the STUARTS, no law so often infamously administered, no law so often openly violated, no law habitually so ill-supervised. In the majority of the shameful cases of disease and death from destitution that shock the Public and disgrace the country, the illegality is quite equal to the inhumanity” (qtd. in House 104-5).

Thus, similar to the Utilitarian emphasis on practicality in administrative manners, his criticism of the Law mainly rests on the wrongful administration and supervision of it and the resultant inhumanity of the consequences of this maladministration and ill-supervision. Even though throughout *Oliver Twist* Dickens criticises and blames the

rationalism of the “philosophers” (as he calls those who act under the influence of Utilitarian thinkers), it would not be too far-fetched to state that in his objection to the maladministration of the Poor Law he himself was influenced by the very ideas he satirises. In fact, according to Engel, “it is probable [...] that in the genesis of his political ideas Dickens was much indebted to the rational reformism of Bentham [...]” (52). Thus with his satire of the “philosophers” in *Oliver Twist*, Dickens was not opposing all Benthamite ideas, what he was against was the inhuman elements he found in the excessive rationality of Utilitarianism. As Cunningham argues, “[h]e could not but acknowledge [Smith, Malthus, and Bentham’s – the most influential thinkers on the development of Utilitarianism – a] power, and he did not offer any radical critique of their understanding of society. Rather, he saw them as dry, desiccated, and inhuman” (160).

As mentioned above, according to Utilitarianism, the worth of any action was determined by its usefulness and the happiness it brings to the greatest number of people. Hence, for Dickens the actions of the Poor Law’s administrators and supervisors are worthless and harmful because they bring more harm than good and instead of bringing happiness to people, they bring misery and suffering.

According to Vincent Newey “the target of *Oliver Twist* was not so much root causes or phenomena as the particular measures brought in by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834” (63). So, in the novel Dickens never criticises or objects to the economic system that have reduced so many people to extreme poverty and a lifetime of suffering and misery in the workhouse. Instead “he concentrates mainly on the bad workhouse feeding, the absurdity of such officers as Bumble and the utter failure to make any proper provision for the pauper children” (House 96).

In *Oliver Twist*, the protagonist is a young boy who is born in a workhouse and is later apprenticed to an undertaker from where he runs away to London and finds himself among thieves and prostitutes. However, despite his lowly upbringing and his experience among criminals in London, he remains uncorrupted and innocent. As Richard Ford remarks, as early as 1839,

Oliver [...] is represented to be a pattern of modern excellence, guileless himself, and measuring others by his own innocence; delicate and high-

mindful, affectionate, noble, brave, generous, with the manners of a son of a most distinguished gentleman, not only uncorrupted but incorruptible. (407)

In fact he is quite different from other paupers in the workhouse and his perfect English is the manifestation of his innocence and gentility. In other words, despite the fact that in the workhouse where he grew up in he was surrounded by paupers and even the beadle and various other officials who oversaw his upbringing do not speak proper English, Oliver somehow never picks up their way of speaking. The reason for this turns out to be his background.

According to Althusser, ideology is “the ‘lived’ relation between men and their world” (*For Marx* 233). However, this relation “is primarily unconscious, determining individuals’ actions without their being aware of this determination” (Montag 274). Thus, being shaped by middle class ideology in which proper speech is one of the marks of belonging to the middle class, Dickens attributes perfect English to his low born hero. As Steven Marcus states, “speech is the recognized sign of class and status” (80), hence, “Oliver’s speech [...] is in keeping with his inborn and relatively high-born status, a mark of what he really is” (Newey 69). The fact that towards the end of the novel we find out that Oliver was in fact the son of a gentleman justifies for Dickens and his audience the improbability of Oliver’s speech.

After Oliver’s birth, his mother dies and the doctor describes her with the words “‘The old story, [...] no wedding-ring’” (4)¹, by which “he means the seduction of a young woman by a more powerful or calculating man” (Glancy 54). However, as the story unfolds and we learn the reality about Oliver’s parents we get the sense that this is not “the old story” after all because of Oliver’s innate and incorruptible goodness. Even though he is illegitimate and born in a workhouse from an unwed mother, Oliver is represented as a paragon of virtue because he is the victim of “his parents’ moral weakness in conceiving a child [...] out of wedlock (Glancy 47). However, it can also be argued that Edwin Leeford (Oliver’s father) and Agnes Fleming (Oliver’s mother) are also represented as victims in one sense because the reason behind his father not marrying Agnes was the fact that he was forced by his family to marry an older and immoral woman for money (Glancy 47). In the novel, this marriage is described as an

¹ All references to *Oliver Twist* are to the 1994 Penguin edition.

“ill-assorted union” (459) and that after a while the couple came to loathe each other (460). Thus, Agnes and Leeford’s “affair is described as weakness, morally wrong only because of the suffering it brings to the offspring, Oliver, born, in society’s view, with the stain of illegitimacy on him” (Glancy 54). In fact, it can be argued that Oliver is incorruptible precisely due to his illegitimate status because Dickens had to justify to his readers having a child born out of wedlock as the hero of his novel.

In Lisa Rodensky’s words, “Dickens’s way of legitimating Oliver means that he can have not a single moment of moral weakness” (73). In other words, Dickens interpellates Oliver as a rightful member of the middle class by giving the attribute of moral strength which the middle class required from its members. Tracing the origins of idealist bourgeois philosophy to eighteenth century liberal philosophy, Althusser states that this liberal philosophy “had translated the economic demands of the rising bourgeoisie into a *moral*, idealist philosophy [...] because the bourgeois forces of production were not sufficiently developed to appear as the driving force behind these demands” (“Return to Hegel” 177) (Emphasis in original). Thus, the tenet of morality is used by the bourgeoisie to make people under its power “obedient and unresisting agents of the [bourgeois] mode of production” (Ferretter 90). According to Marcus, in Dickens’s early novels, his “moral and religious feelings find overt expression in a kind of primitive Christianity whose foremost article of faith is that the meek shall inherit the earth” (73). So, Oliver’s moral strength is rewarded with him inheriting his rightful place in middle class society.

Another way Oliver is rewarded for his moral strength is through acquiring a middle class education. When he first enters Mr. Brownlow’s study and notices the great number of books in it, Mr. Brownlow tells him that he will be allowed to read them if he behaves well (118). Thus, one of the chief means through which Oliver is interpellated as a member of the middle class is through education which is listed by Althusser among the most important ISAs (“Ideology” 143).

At first glance, the fact that an orphan born in a workhouse could be able to read might seem unrealistic, however, the reality was that workhouse children were generally given basic instruction in reading. According to Patrick Brantlinger, “an 1838 survey of about five hundred workhouse children ages nine to sixteen showed that 87 percent could read

at a minimal level or better, though only 53 percent knew how to write” (70). Furthermore, in Victorian times, education came to be seen as the means through which working class children could be made into useful members of society. According to Geoffrey W. Oxley, pauper children were “trained to earn their own living when they grew up” (77). However, this training was not limited to “parish work schemes and apprenticeship [...]. It also involved the provision of formal education, or at least [...] some instruction in ‘reading, writing and casting accounts’” (Oxley 77). The interpellative power of education is shown by the fact that “The 1834 Report [of the Poor Law Commission, which formed the basis of the Poor Law Amendment Act] had assumed that workhouse children would be educated so as to render them ‘industrious and valuable members of the community’” (Kidd 42). Thus the Report “included in its workhouse rules the stipulation that children were to be instructed for at least three hours a day: ‘in reading, writing and the principles of the Christian religion; and such other instructions ... as are calculated to train them to habits of usefulness, industry and virtue’” (Kidd 42).

So it is fair to assume that Oliver received some form of basic education in the workhouse which is of course not adequate for a member of the middle class. According to Joseph W Childers “interpellation is the transformation, or as Althusser says ‘recruitment,’ of the individual into a subject of a particular ideology (or discourse). And this transformation takes place by means of discourse” (105). Oliver Twist is “recruited” into middle class ideology by middle class education of which he gets his first experience when he lives in the country with the Maylies: “Every morning he went to a white-headed old gentleman, who lived near the little church: who taught him to read better” (292). Like other adults who interpellate him into his rightful middle class position, Oliver takes pains to please this “old gentleman” too. In this episode of Oliver’s life, this is not the only means that he is interpellated via learning. After his morning lessons, he takes a walk with Mrs. Maylie and Rose where he listens to “them talk of books” or listens while Rose reads aloud, which is followed by him working hard at preparing his lesson for the next day (292-93). While training his mind, his soul is not forgotten. He also studies the Bible all week long and reads from it at night. Thus Oliver is recruited completely into the ranks of the middle class. After only three months “Oliver Twist [...] become[s] completely domesticated with the old lady and

her niece” (Dickens *Oliver Twist* 294). According to Andrew Blake, related closely to education and literacy is the “surrounding ideologies of domesticity and privacy and its focus on the family as the centre of social and cultural reproduction” (135). Thus Oliver’s domestication is the final step of his interpellation as a member of the middle class. Additionally, the fact that he is so eager to please his tutor and the Maylies illustrate that he is a willing participant in his own subjection.

Another character in the novel who is shown to be interpellated into the dominant order is Nancy, the prostitute. When we first encounter her speech in the novel she does not speak proper English (110). However, as the novel progresses and she encounters the middle class benevolence of Rose Maylie, her speech changes and acquires the characteristics of a middle class lady. As an anonymous critic wrote in 1840: “She talks the common slang of London, in its ordinary dialect, in the beginning of the novel; at the end no heroine that ever went mad in white satin talked more picked and perfumed sentences of sentimentality” (“Charles Dickens” 411).

She is not only shown to be interpellated through her speech however, her behaviour and belief system also transform into a middle class one. At first she helps Fagin and his gang to kidnap Oliver from Mr. Brownlow. Touched by Oliver’s innocence however, she gradually changes and begins to protect him from Sikes and Fagin. Thus Oliver is the first means through which Nancy is interpellated into a middle class mindset via her behaviour and her speech since after being changed by Oliver’s goodness she begins not only to act virtuous like Oliver but also to speak like him (Rodensky 74).

Since Nancy is a prostitute, her goodness and benevolence might be argued to be problematic from a middle class audience’s point of view. However she arouses sympathy in middle class readers because the qualities she shows are those approved by domestic ideology. As Newey states, “the qualities that he [Dickens] values in her belong to a recognizable and indisputably conservative frame. They are ‘wifely’ (towards Bill), ‘sisterly’/‘motherly’ (towards Oliver), self-sacrificial (towards both). To these is added the moral uprightness of ‘the sense of her own deep shame’” (93). In Brenda Ayres’s words, “Her goodness is a gendered goodness. She becomes a good person only when she helps Oliver or nurses her ‘husband’” (120).

The fact of the existence of a son born to Edwin Leeford and his wife, named Edward Leeford (known as Monks throughout the novel), further complicates the issue of Oliver's illegitimacy. Whereas Oliver is pure goodness, Monks seems to be made up of only evil. He is described in the novel as "the sole and most unnatural issue" of "the wretched marriage, into which family pride, and the most sordid and narrowest of all ambition, forced [...] [Edwin Leeford] when a mere boy" (459). Monks himself is described with words that make him the embodiment of evil: "you, who from your cradle were gall and bitterness to your own father's heart, and in whom all evil passions, vice and profligacy, festered" (465). Since he is the product not of a union of love but of a forced marriage caused by the greed and ambition of Edwin Leeford's family, which, according to Dickens is unnatural, Monks himself is unnatural and full of hatred.

As opposed to the innate evil of Monks, Oliver is good through and through. In his Preface to the Third Edition of the novel, Dickens stated that his aim was "to show, in little Oliver, the principle of Good surviving through every adverse circumstance, and triumphing at last" (3). Hence, Oliver is incorruptible because he has an innate sense of goodness and this is what makes him finally deserve "the middle-class security and affection that are his birthright" (Nelson 79). Oliver's father's will stated that if a son was born to him and Agnes Fleming, he would inherit his money "only on the stipulation that in his minority he should never have stained his name with any public act of dishonour, meanness, cowardice, or wrong" (Dickens *Oliver Twist* 486). Because of his innate goodness, Oliver "behaves in accordance with his father's injunction – of which of course he knows nothing" (Marcus 86). Thus, the illegitimate Oliver is favoured over the legitimate Monks because "what matters is not so much roots and branches, the groundedness and growth of the family tree, as purity of heart and mind; for the claims of the strictly legitimate heir, Monks, are subordinated on considerations of morality to those of the illegitimate but deserving Oliver" (Newey 82).

After Oliver is born and his mother dies, he is "farmed" – "[t]hat is, [he is] [...] put out under contract to a local matron, who agreed to maintain and care for infants at a stipulated price" – because he has nobody to take care of him (Paroissien 41). However, as her name indicates, Mrs. Mann, under whose care Oliver is placed, is anything but motherly. In the novel Dickens describes her in ironic terms as thus:

[she] was a woman of wisdom and experience; she knew what was good for children; and she had a very accurate perception of what was good for herself. So, she appropriated the greater part of the weekly stipend to her own use, and consigned the rising parochial generation to even a shorter allowance than was originally provided for them. (5)

So instead of looking out for the children she is taking care of, she thinks foremost of herself. Dickens names her Mrs. Mann because she does not have the natural motherly instinct that he and his readers believe a woman should have. Her lack of motherly instinct and selfishness has fatal consequences for the babies placed under her care:

at the very moment when a child had contrived to exist upon the smallest possible portion of the weakest possible food, it did perversely happen in eight and a half cases out of ten, either that it sickened from want and cold, or fell into the fire from neglect, or got half-smothered by accident; in any one of which cases, the miserable little being was usually summoned into another world. (Dickens *Oliver Twist* 5-6)

This comment of Dickens's is apparently based on the truth since "in baby farms in rural areas the annual death rate ran between 40 and 60 per cent; for farms in large towns, it was as high as 90 per cent" (Paroissien 42). According to Victorian domestic ideology, a woman who performs the role of motherhood properly is selfless and always puts her family's interests before hers. Perpetuating this domestic ideology Dickens puts forth through the figure of Mrs. Mann that a woman's motherly duty is a vital one. For the babies under Mrs. Mann's care, she is their only family and when she neglects her duties as a mother for her own self-interest, the result is fatal for her charges.

Set against Mrs. Mann is the proper motherly figure of Mrs. Bedwin. As opposed to Mrs. Mann, whose improper motherly conduct causes the death of those she is supposed to take care of, Mrs. Bedwin nurses Oliver through a serious illness and thus saves his life. In fact, in the novel Dickens describes her as "a motherly old lady" and praises the kindness she shows towards Oliver: "the old lady [...] looked so kindly and lovingly in his [Oliver's] face, that he could not help placing his little withered hand in hers, and drawing it round his neck" (95). Mrs. Bedwin is also Oliver's first conscious encounter with a middle class world and is the first means of his interpellation into this world. Dickens states that when Mrs. Bedwin tells Oliver to "lie very quiet", he does so "because he was anxious to obey the kind old lady in all things" (96). Thus by being

obedient to the wishes of Mrs. Bedwin, he takes the first step towards being admitted into the ranks of the middle class.

As Oliver is recovering from his illness, Mrs. Bedwin keeps him company and entertains him with “a great many stories” (Dickens *Oliver Twist* 116). Viewed under the light of Althusser’s theory of interpellation however, these stories are not innocent entertainment, but a means of educating Oliver about a middle class lifestyle. She tells Oliver about “an amiable and handsome daughter of hers, who was married to an amiable and handsome man, and lived in the country” (116), living an “amiable” middle class life one presumes. She also tells him about her son, “who was a clerk to a merchant in the West Indies; and who was, also, such a good young man, and wrote such dutiful letters home four times a-year, that it brought tears into her eyes to talk about them” (116). Thus his son is dutifully working for the Empire, while at the same time not forgetting about his duties as a son. As the ideal motherly figure, Mrs. Bedwin cannot help but cry when she talks about her son and his letters. Furthermore, even though he “had been dead and gone [...] just six-and-twenty years”, Mrs. Bedwin still talks about “the merits of her kind good husband” (116), thus not forgetting her duties as a wife even twenty six years after her husband’s death. These stories of Mrs. Bedwin’s “on the excellences of her children, and [...] her [...] husband” are followed by the middle class ritual of tea. After tea, Oliver is shown an example of middle class leisure by being taught how to play “cribbage” by Mrs. Bedwin. After the game it is time for a light meal and “then to go cosily to bed” (116). This passage in the novel illustrates perfectly the kind of lifestyle an older middle class woman would have and she uses her own life story as a means of interpellating Oliver into the ranks of the middle class.

The second step in his admittance to the ranks of the middle class is through winning the approval of Mrs. Bedwin’s employer, Mr. Brownlow. While preparing Oliver to see Mr. Brownlow for the first time, Mrs. Bedwin says “we must get up our best looks, because the better we look, the more he’ll be pleased” (99). If he pleases Mr. Brownlow (the patriarch of the household), Oliver will be admitted as a member of the middle class. Being admitted is not enough however. He has to behave in accordance with middle class values to stay a member. When Oliver thinks that Mr. Brownlow will send

him back on the streets after he recovers from his illness, the latter assures him that that will never happen as long as he displays proper behaviour. “You need not be afraid of my deserting you, unless you give me cause” he tells Oliver (119).

Oliver’s interpellation in Mr. Brownlow’s house is a success from the start. When he recovers from his illness, his old clothes are replaced by “a complete new suit, and a new cap, and a new pair of shoes” (116). Once the subject of charity, Oliver is now the charitable one as he gives his old clothes “to a servant who had been very kind to him, and ask[s] her to sell them [...], and keep the money for herself” (116). “[P]icking up the philanthropic code of his new environment,” Oliver displays the kind of benevolence he learns from Mr. Brownlow which shows he is successfully being interpellated as a member of the middle class.

Just like Oliver has to please Mr. Brownlow with a proper appearance to gain admittance into his world, it can be argued that Dickens had to “get up his best looks” for his audience to be admitted into their homes. The way he achieves this is via self-sensorship. He himself admits this in his preface to the novel. He says that even though in the novel he deals with a criminal underworld he states: “I endeavoured, while I painted it in all its fallen and degraded aspect, to banish from the lips of the lowest character I introduced, any expression that could by possibility offend” (“Author’s Preface” 6). His deliberate avoidance of anything that might offend his audience shows that as an artist he has been interpellated into the bourgeois world.

As he himself has been interpellated into a middle class world, he uses *Oliver Twist* to interpellate others into a middle class way of thinking by showing crime “in all its fallen and degraded aspect”(Dickens “Author’s Preface” 6). Furthermore, in his Preface he criticises previous artistic endeavours into the criminal world such as *The Beggar’s Opera* for glamourising the criminal lifestyle and states that his purpose in writing *Oliver Twist* is just the opposite “I saw no reason, when I wrote this book, why the dregs of life (so long as their speech did not offend the ear) should not serve the purpose of a moral” (5). He describes his handling of the criminals with these words:

Here are no canterings upon moonlit heaths, no merry-makings in the snugest of all possible caverns, none of the attractions of dress, no embroidery, no lace, no jack-boots, no crimson coats and ruffles, none of

the dash and freedom with which 'the road' has been, time out of mind, invested. The cold, wet, shelterless midnight streets of London; the foul and frowsy dens, where vice is closely packed and lacks the room to turn; the haunts of hunger and disease, the shabby rags that scarcely hold together: where are the attractions of these things? ("Author's Preface" 5)

Thus his aim in showing the criminal underworld in all its reality (albeit without its offensive language so as not to offend his middle class readers) is to deter his readers from a criminal lifestyle and hence to interpellate them into a respectable middle class one.

Another form of Dickensian self-censorship in the novel can be seen in the character of Nancy. Her profession of prostitute is never stated in the novel, only suggested through her dress and manners: "[She] wore a good deal of hair, not very neatly turned up behind, and [was] rather untidy about the shoes and stockings. [...] [She] had a great deal of colour in [...] [her face], and looked quite stout and hearty. [...] [She was] remarkably free and agreeable in [her] manners" (78). Only in the Preface to the third edition of the novel does Dickens call her a prostitute (3). Even though having a prostitute as one of the good characters might be seen as problematic for a novel that addresses a middle class audience, Dickens evades the issue by never naming her as such. As Ella Westland states: "her profession is not distinctly identified in the novel, so the moral issue is submerged" (469).

Additionally, the prostitute in Victorian times was a figure that was generally seen as a social victim who can be redeemed from her corrupt lifestyle if she agreed to be saved, as the popularity of the Victorian "prostitute rescue movement" shows (Lesley A. Hall 17). According to Lesley A. Hall, "much of the moral impetus behind the prostitute rescue movement came from a sense that many were unwilling recruits forced into the life by the severity of society towards a first slip" (17). Also the influence of the Evangelist movement on the efforts to rescue prostitutes from a life of sin cannot be overlooked (Lesley A. Hall 21). Dickens himself was involved in the "prostitute rescue movement". Working closely with Angela Burdett-Coutts he founded Urania Cottage, a home aimed at the reformation of prostitutes. In this too he was influenced by the domestic ideology of his times:

Believing that women were happiest at the hearth and that prostitutes would naturally want to be led into the domestic fold, Dickens became an avid supporter of Miss Coutts' project. In fact, he served as the chairman of the administrative committee for Urania Cottage from 1847 to 1858 and was often active in running this asylum for convicted prostitutes. (Ayres 131)

Once reformed in Urania Cottage, the prostitute would be sent overseas to start a new life as a wife. In "An Appeal to Fallen Women" which Dickens wrote to be distributed among women taken into police custody, he states the aim of the Home:

In this Home they will be taught all household work that would be useful to them in a home of their own, and enable them to make it comfortable and happy. [...] After they have repented and have learned how to do their duty there, [...] they will be supplied with every means, when some time shall have elapsed, and their conduct shall have fully proved their earnestness and reformation, to go abroad, where, in a distant country, they may become the faithful wives of honest men [...]. (382-83)

In *Oliver Twist*, Rose Maylie takes on a reformatory role and tries to save Nancy from her life of sin. She offers to have her sent away from England to a country where she can start her life over. However, Nancy refuses this offer, which costs her her life. As Brenda Ayres comments:

The text suggests that if Nancy had gone to America, she would have enjoyed a life comparable to Rose's, but in the New World. It appears that fallen women are to be considered victims of their environment and that, if given a chance to reform, they would, and society would stand to benefit from their reformation. [...] Suggested is that such opportunities are not possible in English society. (124)

However, Nancy suffers a violent death because she does not take up the chance of reform given to her. In other words, her refusal of being interpellated into respectable society causes her death.

The Victorian middle class is often accused of being hypocritical in its morality, acting one way in public and another way in private, and the prostitute rescue movement is one of the instances in which its members can be called hypocrites. Outwardly they proposed that the prostitute is a social victim that can be redeemed back into proper society, as long as she is redeemed back into it somewhere away from England.

While Nancy is the fallen woman who refuses to be rescued, Rose is completely virtuous despite being tainted by the suspicion of illegitimacy. She embodies all the characteristics of the “angel in the house”:

Cast in so slight and exquisite a mould; so mild and gentle; so pure and beautiful; that earth seemed not her element, nor its rough creatures her fit companions. The very intelligence that shone in her deep blue eye, and was stamped upon her noble head, seemed scarcely of her age, or of the world; and yet the changing expression of sweetness and good humour, the thousand lights that played about the face, and left no shadow there; above all, the smile, the cheerful, happy smile, were made for Home, and fireside peace and happiness. (Dickens *Oliver Twist* 260)

Like Oliver Twist, whose innate goodness proved him to be a rightful member of the middle class, Rose Maylie’s angelic virtues also turn out to be related to her lineage when it is revealed that she is Oliver’s aunt. As Catherine Waters argues, “the evidence of Rose’s domestic virtue, which apparently transcends the presumption of her illegitimate birth, is part of Dickens’s argument about natural innocence and the rejection of social and legal legitimacy as an index to character” (36). Like Oliver, her virtue is also rewarded when Harry Maylie (the son of Mrs. Maylie, who raised her) gives up his political ambitions and becomes a parson in a small country church in order to marry her. In other words, she is rewarded by attaining the proper sphere of the “angel in the house”, namely, domestic bliss. In Ayres’s words, “good people surround her and contain her within a proper domestic sphere so that she will never be a social misfit like Nancy or Agnes” (124).

One of those good people is Mr. Brownlow who embodies the “Dickens benevolence” mentioned above. Newey claims that “there can be no doubt that goodness in Dickens is a middle-class virtue” (68). Thus, as opposed to the cruelty and abusiveness of officials within the Poor Law system who are supposed to take care of the needy, Mr. Brownlow, as a middle class gentleman, is all compassion and goodness. In other words, in the novel “proper middle-class virtue is presented as something quite apart from the institutional authority and commercial preoccupations of the public world. Its justification is simply compassionate goodness of heart” (Cheadle 313). This “middle-class virtue” of “goodness” is also inculcated into Oliver during the time he spends with the Maylies in the country when he makes “calls at the clean houses of the labouring

men” with Rose and Mrs. Maylie or carries out “some little commission of charity [...] in the village” (Dickens *Oliver Twist* 293).

A major Ideological State Apparatus in Victorian times was the law. At first glance, Dickens’s satire of the law in *Oliver Twist* might be seen as refuting what this thesis proposes. A deeper analysis however reveals that what Dickens is against is not the law system itself, but the incompetence and corruption of individuals within it. The major point of satire of the law in the novel is done through the figure of the magistrate Fang and “his mode of administering justice” (Dickens *Oliver Twist* 86). He is depicted as an outrageously incompetent and stupid figure. When Mr. Brownlow – referred to in the novel as the “old gentleman” (86) – wants to speak in his court, the magistrate calls him “an insolent, impertinent fellow” and accuses him of bullying a magistrate (89), illustrating Dickens’s criticism of the abuse of power certain authority figures display. Mr. Fang even goes as far as accusing the respectable Mr. Brownlow of theft (93). Mr. Fang also shows his incompetence in sentencing the innocent Oliver Twist to three months of hard labour (92). While for the good characters in the novel, Oliver’s innocence is outwardly seen in his face, Mr. Fang calls him a “hardened scoundrel” (91) displaying his unfitness for the job of administering justice.

The same law that sentences Oliver to three months hard labour also manages to hang Fagin for a crime he did not actually commit. His crime is stated as being “accessory before the fact” (471), hardly a capital offence. Thus it can be argued that he is not so much hanged for an actual crime, but for being a threat to the social order. As an anonymous reviewer of the novel commented as early as 1840: “The judge [...] before whom Mr. Dickens brings the cause, and the jury to whom he sends it for trial, are determined to hang Fagin, to oblige the tender-hearted students of the circulating library” (“Charles Dickens” 413). Even though Fagin is being accused of being accessory to a crime, the exact nature of the crime is never actually stated by the court where he is tried. In Rodensky’s words: “[Dickens] never specifies the crime to which Fagin is accessory. This ambiguity makes the charge Dickens has brought against Fagin – an accessory before the fact without specifying what the fact is – feel all the more like a matter of who he is rather than what he has (or has not) done” (57). In other words, the real explanation for the severity of Fagin’s punishment is the fact that he is a Jew, an

alien and thus outside acceptable social norms (Newey 102). In fact, in the nineteenth century, the Jew was often a stereotypical villain in novels and on stage and the character of Fagin and the readers' response to him rely heavily on this stereotype: "the character of Fagin [...] borrows heavily from the stereotype of the stage Jew and the reader's response to Fagin relies on his or her recognition of, and openness to, well-worn theatrical, literary (and racist) conventions" (John 129). Furthermore, in the novel

Fagin goes through no act, ritual, or pattern which identifies him as a Jew. Actually, aside from his conventionalized physical traits and old-clothes dealings, his main claim to Jewishness is the fact that Dickens constantly labels him 'the Jew.' It seems fair to assume that Fagin was a Jew because for Dickens and his readers he made a picturesque and believable villain. (Stone 452)

To go back to Fagin's punishment, this episode in the novel shows that Dickens fully approved the law not only as an ideological state apparatus, but also as a repressive state apparatus because it was successful in ridding society of a threat like Fagin.

Another interesting point about Fagin is the origin of his name. When Dickens was working in the blacking warehouse, one of the boys he worked with was called Bob Fagin. In his autobiographical fragment Dickens describes his first encounter with Bob Fagin: "[he] came up, in a ragged apron and a paper cap, on the first Monday morning, to show me the trick of using the string and tying the knot. His name was Bob Fagin; and I took the liberty of using his name, long afterwards, in *Oliver Twist*" (qtd in Forster 1: 22). Later on Bob Fagin showed kindness towards Dickens during an illness he suffered at the warehouse. In Dickens's words:

Bob Fagin was very good to me on the occasion of a bad attack of my old disorder. I suffered such excruciating pain that time, that they made a temporary bed of straw in my old recess in the counting-house, and I rolled about on the floor, and Bob filled empty blacking-bottles with hot water, and applied relays of them to my side, half the day. I got better, and quite easy towards evening; but Bob (who was much bigger and older than I) did not like the idea of my going home alone, and took me under his protection. (qtd in Forster 1: 27)

So, why does he name his villain after a childhood acquaintance who had shown kindness to him? The reason for this according to Ackroyd is that

[Bob Fagin's] very presence evoked a horror greater than any gratitude Dickens might have felt – the horror of being a part of the poor. That is why the child's name is used for the terrible figure of Fagin in *Oliver Twist*; just as Bob Fagin “in a ragged apron and a paper cap” trained Charles Dickens in the skills of tying string around the blacking bottles, so Fagin instructs Oliver Twist in the art of stealing. (83)

Thus when writing *Oliver Twist*, the middle class Dickens can only recall the danger Bob Fagin represented to him of becoming a permanent member of the working class and hence names his villain after him. Just as Dickens managed to escape that fate and attain a life of respectable middle class comfort, so in the novel Oliver manages to escape from the life of crime Fagin tries to pull him into to a life of “respectability [...], from dirt to cleanliness and gentility” (Ackroyd 230).

While Fagin is caught, tried in court and hanged for a crime he did not actually commit, the real murderer Sikes manages to escape the clutches of the law only to die by hanging himself by accident. According to Newey, the reason behind this is the attributes Dickens gives to Sikes: “There is about Sikes something of the bulldog breed, whether British or English; in his sturdy ferocity and independence, his strength and determination not to give in or take things lying down, something of a celebration of national characteristics” (102). So while the alien Jew is punished by the law so that he can no longer prove a threat to English society, Sikes manages to escape punishment to a point. Of course in the end he also has to be punished because as a criminal he is going against the dominant social order, however he shows signs of remorse and guilt when he wanders aimlessly through the countryside after he commits murder and finally goes back to London to get his due punishment, albeit from his own hands. Fagin on the other hand, does not show any remorse either during his trial or while waiting in his cell to be hanged. While Sikes has Nancy's accusing eyes in his mind the whole time he is running away – which remind him of his crime – what Fagin notices during his trial are trivialities such as what the people watching him in the gallery are doing or what the judge is wearing (497-98). He even curses away religious men – described by Dickens as “venerable men of his own persuasion” (501) – who come to pray beside him. Thus

not only does he not feel any remorse, he stays 'bad' to the end by refusing even religious redemption.

While Fagin is hanged for a crime he did not actually commit, the middle class characters in the book (Mr. Losberne, Rose and Mrs. Maylie) get away with not handing Oliver over to the police after he breaks into the Maylies' home. They justify their deception of the police with the purity of their motive: "The object is a good one, and that must be our excuse" Mr. Losberne says (276). In other words, when it comes to middle class benevolence, the "goodness" of its objective negates the "badness" of the act of lying because through their lie they are able to save Oliver from sinking into a lower class lifestyle and thus enable him to inherit his birthright of a virtuous, middle-class lifestyle.

After his adversaries are punished, and Oliver is restored to his rightful middle class position, he makes a journey to his place of birth to find his friend Dick and interpellate him the same way as himself. When they get there he voices his plans – which summarise the course his own interpellation took – to Rose Maylie: "we'll take him away from here, and have him clothed and taught, and send him to some quiet country place where he may grow strong and well" (482). However, probably due to not having a gentleman father like Oliver, Dick is not as lucky as him, as he has died before he can "grow strong and well."

For a novel that purports to have as one of its main themes the criticism of the effects of the Poor Law Amendment Act, it gives no attention to the fate of the rest of the inmates of the workhouse where Oliver was born. They "are consigned to the margins as the book moves to cultivate the centre", that is, the comforts of the middle class life that Oliver attains (Newey 70). At "this stage neither he nor the narrative in which he stars takes any interest in the institution or the plight of its inhabitants beyond their distant place in the history of his eventual affluence" (Newey 70). In other words, in *Oliver Twist*, what seems to matter to Dickens is not the plight of the destitute and needy, but the interpellation of his hero to his rightful middle class position.

CHAPTER II:

GREAT EXPECTATIONS: PIP'S INTERPELLATION AS A MIDDLE CLASS VICTORIAN GENTLEMAN

Published in Dickens's own periodical, *All The Year Round*, from December 1860 to August 1861, *Great Expectations* is one of the final novels of Charles Dickens. In addition to the fact that the novel itself illustrates the formation of a Victorian subject through the character of Pip, the circumstances behind its publication exemplify the importance Dickens gave to running a successful periodical in the Victorian market. As Philip Hobsbaum explains: "[t]he sales of *All the Year Round* were declining beneath the weight of a tedious serial by Charles Lever, *A Day's Ride*. The ride actually lasted nine months. After the first four, Dickens found it necessary to launch *Great Expectations* as yet another of his attempts at rescue" (221).

Great Expectations is a *bildungsroman* tracing the life of Pip from his childhood in the English countryside to his coming into a legacy, and going to London to become a "gentleman." In fact, Gilmour claims that "*Great Expectations* is the most complex and satisfying fictional examination of the idea of the gentleman in the Victorian period" ("Pip" 121). Victorian gentlemen were the embodiment of Victorian values such as morality, respectability and social upstanding. However, Pip's "great expectations" of becoming a gentleman end with failure because it lacked one very important Victorian virtue: hard work. In other words because his efforts to become a gentleman were financed not by his own efforts, but by money given to him by a convict, they failed since, for the Victorians, as Harold Perkin argues, "The true gentleman [. . .] was the entrepreneurial ideal of the self-made man" (278).

Traditionally, the rank of "[t]he gentleman was a respected rank [...] and carried the prestige of its historic landed origins. However, partly because it could never be defined satisfactorily, it was not the possession of a caste" (Gilmour *Victorian* 20). As the middle class started to gain wealth and power in the Victorian period, the term gentleman started to gain wider application and began to denote not only wealth but

also the possession of middle-class values. As Alexis de Tocqueville observed in 1856 about the concept: “we find its connotation being steadily widened in England as the classes draw nearer to each other and intermingle” (qtd. in Gilmour *Victorian* 20). In other words, “[b]y the nineteenth century in England, the idea of birth had declined as a basis for gentility [...], and the rigid structure of the class system [...] [became] permeable as the Industrial Revolution fostered the creation of an upwardly mobile middle class” (Waters 17). Furthermore,

the term ‘gentleman’ encompassed a broad range of connotative possibilities that could be exploited by the rising commercial bourgeoisie as it grew in size and wealth and as its members sought to gain social standing. The imprecision and flexibility of the term allowed the most prosperous of the bourgeoisie to assume genteel status with relative ease. (Young 15)

The concept of gentlemanliness promoted “an ideal of conduct for young men which was decent, generous, open, of the world but not worldly, and brave without the recklessness and licentiousness of aristocracy” (Gilmour *Victorian* 20). As in many areas of Victorian society, Evangelicalism was an influence on gentlemanly behaviour as well, since it “reminded the gentleman that he had a duty [...] to do more than enjoy the privileges of his station” (Castronovo 47). Thus, with the Victorian age, the rank of gentleman became not just a social one, but more importantly, a moral one. As Catherine Waters states,

[t]he ‘gentleman’ became an important enabling metaphor in the representation of middle-class ascendancy. The appropriation and redefinition of ‘gentlemanliness’ as a mark of character, rather than a sign of birth, enabled the upwardly mobile professional classes to be assimilated into the existing hierarchy through the middle-class discourse of morality. (165)

The concept of the gentleman had acquired such importance for the Victorians that Samuel Smiles – who is described by Briggs as “the most Victorian of the Victorians” (“Later Victorian Age” 8) – ended his famous book *Self-Help* (1859) with a chapter entitled ‘Character: the True Gentleman’ (Gilmour *Victorian* 21). In this chapter Smiles presented “‘The True Gentleman’ as the goal of character to which the self-helper should aspire” (Gilmour *Victorian* 167). Since for Victorians, under the influence of Evangelicalism, “the foundation of character was morality” (Karen Volland Waters 19),

it was emphasised that “the Victorian gentleman should be courteous, affable, kind, deferential, temperate, unassuming, clean, pure, considerate, courageous, understanding, inoffensive, unobtrusive, socially adroit, truthful, civil, circumspect, sympathetic, respectful, unaffected, and adaptable” (Karen Volland Waters 21).

According to Karen Volland Waters, *Great Expectations* is “[a] useful illustration of the growing uncertainties and inquiries surrounding the perfect gentleman” (41). The novel’s protagonist, Pip, lives in a small village with his sister and her husband Joe Gargery, a blacksmith, because he lost his parents when he was a baby. He lives a contented life with his only expectation being becoming Joe’s apprentice, until he is invited by Miss Havisham to Satis House to play with her beautiful ward Estella who treats him with nothing but contempt. She calls Pip “a common labouring-boy” (50)² and points out his “coarse hands” and “thick boots” (51). Pip does not see himself as common until he is positioned and named by Estella as such as he himself acknowledges to Biddy years later: “what would it signify to me, being coarse and common, if nobody had told me so!” (108). Thus, Pip’s subjectivity is formed by Estella as being common and working class. In other words, Estella interpellates Pip as common and working class since interpellation is the means through which people are formed as subjects (Strinati 137). Estella does this by remarking on Pip’s “clothes, posture, speech” which are “signifiers of class” and in the process interpellates Pip as a working class subject (Newey 182).

He leaves Satis House “pondering [...] that I was much more ignorant than I had considered myself last night, and generally that I was in a low-lived, bad way” (Dickens *Great Expectations* 55). In fact from that day onwards, he starts viewing his life and the people around him through the eyes of Estella. When he goes to bed that night, “how common Estella would consider Joe, a mere blacksmith” and “how Joe and my sister were then sitting in the kitchen, [...] and how Miss Havisham and Estella never sat in a kitchen, but were far above the level of such common things” are the thoughts that go through his head (60-61). According to Eagleton, “[v]iewed psychologically, [ideology] is less a system of articulated doctrines than a set of images, symbols and occasionally concepts which we ‘live’ at an unconscious level” (218-19). Thus for Pip, before

² All references to *Great Expectations* are to the 1992 Wordworth edition

meeting Estella and being named by her as “common”, he was unconsciously of his life and people in it as being “working class”. After the “commonness” of his life is pointed out to him by Estella, who is above him in terms of social status, he becomes conscious of how people, images and symbols in his life such as Joe and the kitchen represent a working class lifestyle.

Pip is much effected by Estella’s remarks because he states: “my sister’s bringing-up had made me sensitive” (53). His sister, far from being motherly, is the opposite of the Victorian motherly ideal, which will be discussed in detail later on. Thus Pip claims that the severity of his sister towards him has made him “morally timid and very sensitive” (53). Being highly sensitive, he is open and ready to be moulded by the ideas the people around him have of him.

Hence, from that day onwards, he begins to harbour a wish to change his life and become a gentleman in order to win the admiration of Estella. However, he knows that since he is destined to become an apprentice to Joe to become a blacksmith, he could never realise this wish. So he desperately tries to improve his learning in order to at least become less common. The children of the village are educated in the evening school of “Mr Wopsle’s great-aunt” who “is a ridiculous old woman of limited means and unlimited infirmity, who used to go to sleep from six to seven every evening, in the society of the youth who paid twopence per week each for the improving opportunity of seeing her do it” (Dickens *Great Expectations* 36). Hence, the education she gives is no education at all and there Pip learns “to read, write, and cipher, on the very smallest scale” (Dickens *Great Expectations* 37) which is no use for the realisation of his wish to become a gentleman. The reason behind the inadequacy of Pip’s education for the attainment of his dream of becoming a gentleman is the fact that the ultimate aim of a gentlemanly education in Victorian times was “to establish and maintain class superiority and to maintain positions of power and control”, in other words to interpellate middle class subjects (Karen Volland Waters 18). Desperate to improve his learning in order to impress Estella, Pip appeals to Mr Wopsle’s great-aunt’s granddaughter Biddy, who is much more the teacher to the pupils than her grandmother. He summarises his intentions to Biddy as having “a particular reason for wishing to get on in life” and asks her to “impart all her learning to [him]” (61). So Pip is aware of the

power of education in shaping subjectivity and behaviour. However, since he does not have access to a gentleman's education, all he can hope for is to learn enough to make himself less common through acquiring basic literary skills.

He continues to go and 'play' with Estella for several years until the time comes for him to be apprenticed to Joe. Like all aspects of his life, his view of becoming a blacksmith changes from a positive one to its opposite. Before Estella entered his life, he saw the prospect of working in the forge as a blacksmith "as the glowing road to manhood and independence" (Dickens *Great Expectations* 91). According to Göran Therborn, "[i]deology functions by moulding personality: it *subjects* the amorphous libido of new-born human animals to a specific social order and *qualifies* them for the differential roles they will play in society" (172) (emphasis in original). Subjected to believe that the forge was a means of achieving "manhood and independence", Pip had been looking forward to his apprenticeship. However "within a single year, all this was changed. Now, it was all coarse and common" (91). So being positioned by Estella as common, makes Pip realise that his apprenticeship would not be a way to gain independence, rather, it would be a form of slavery for him because he cannot gain the upper class Estella by living a working class life as a common labourer. By gaining independence, he will be able to become an individual and not merely a "common labouring-boy" (Dickens *Great Expectations* 55) and thus be able to attain Estella.

Despite resenting it, however, he continues to work as Joe's apprentice because of Joe's goodness and the fear of hurting him. In this instance we see Dickens's exultation of the virtue of goodness as Pip comments:

It is not possible to know how far the influence of any amiable, honest-hearted, duty-doing man flies out into the world; but it is very possible to know how it has touched one's self in going by, and I know right well, that any good that intermixed itself with my apprenticeship came of plain, contented Joe, and not of restlessly aspiring discontented me. (91-92)

As well as emphasising the importance of 'goodness' for leading a happy, contented life, this comment of Pip's also shows that being satisfied with one's lot in life brings happiness while wanting more brings only discontent and unhappiness. After working in the forge, he goes home with Joe to supper and for Pip "the place and the meal would

have a more homely look than ever, and [he] would feel more ashamed of home than ever” (92). The Victorians attributed great importance to the home, and the fact that Pip complains of the ‘homeliness’ of his home makes it another source of his discontent and unhappiness because it goes against the sacredness of home upheld by middle class ideology. Furthermore, it can be argued that the inadequacy of his ‘home’ makes him resent his class position since “[o]nce his curiosity and ambition are aroused by a glimpse of a larger life, the deprivation makes his ‘home’ into a place of frustration and constraint” (Herst 122).

Joe is the perfect embodiment of the way labour power is reproduced, not only through learning the skills that the work requires, but also learning “rules of morality, civic and professional conscience, which actually means [...] ultimately the rules of the order established by class domination” (Althusser “Ideology” 132). According to Susan Schoenbauer Thurin, “Joe at work in the forge glorifies labor” (205) and Philip Hobsbaum states that he “is an embodiment of the dignity of labour” (235). Furthermore, he accepts his place in “the order established by class domination” and is quite uncomfortable when he has to leave it. He says to Pip:

I’m wrong out of the forge, the kitchen, or off th’ meshes [sic]. You won’t find half so much fault in me if you think of me in my forge dress, with my hammer in my hand, or even my pipe. You won’t find half so much fault in me if, supposing as you should ever wish to see me, you come and put your head in at the forge window and see Joe, the blacksmith, there, at the old anvil, in the old burnt apron, sticking to old work. (192)

“He rests content and unquestioning in his position within the class structure” (Flint xix) and he accepts that social divisions must exist for society to continue functioning: “one man’s a blacksmith, and one’s a whitesmith, and one’s a goldsmith, and one’s a coppersmith. Divisions [sic] among such must come, and must be met as they come” (Dickens *Great Expectations* 191). This speech of Joe’s prompts Pip to comment that “there was a simple dignity in him” (192). He has dignity because he “never complain[s] of anything [...] but ever [does] his duty in his way of life, with a strong hand, a quiet tongue, and a gentle heart” (Dickens *Great Expectations* 242). It can be argued that in Joe, Dickens creates a character whom he thought his readers should and would approve of (Newey 6) since his acceptance of his position within the class structure “reflects Dickens’s [...] conservatism in matters of social organization”

(Newey 188), a conservatism embodying middle-class beliefs and values which he shared with his readers.

As opposed to the goodness, kindness and contentedness of Joe, Pip's sister Mrs Joe – as she is known throughout the book – is shrewd, angry, mean and constantly resents the housework she has to perform, thus exemplifying not “the admired model of Victorian womanhood [...], [but] the anti-type of this ideal” (Newey 212). While for the “angel in the house,” ideal within Victorian ideology, housework is a duty that is performed happily without complaint, for Mrs Joe it is a vengeful act done to scare off Joe and Pip and to make them feel guilty. Catherine Waters argues that “Pip's portrait of his sister invokes a[n] [...] expectation of maternal devotion that she fails to embody. Her representation helps to define a norm of motherhood and domesticity that was an important part of the affirmation of middle-class values in the nineteenth century (152). It can be argued that through the portrayal of what Mrs Joe lacks, Dickens illustrates the importance of the qualities ideal womanhood should possess since Mrs Joe's domestic inadequacy makes Pip resent his home, which was the most important sphere for the Victorians.

When Miss Havisham asks Joe to come to Satis House with the papers which are needed to make Pip his apprentice, Mrs Joe resents being left out and throws out Pip and Joe from the house and starts performing housework. Pip's description of this scene emphasises how Mrs Joe is the opposite of the “angel in the house” ideal:

She asked me and Joe whether we supposed she was doormats under our feet, and how we dared to use her so, and what company we graciously thought she *was* fit for? When she had exhausted a torrent of such inquiries, she threw a candlestick at Joe, burst into a loud sobbing, got out the dustpan [...] put on her coarse apron, and began clearing up to a terrible extent. Not satisfied with a dry cleaning, she took to a pail and scrubbing-brush, and cleaned us out of house and home, so that we stood shivering in the back-yard. (83)

Thus, while for the husband of the ‘angel in the house’, his home is a sanctuary from the meanness of the outside world, it is the opposite for Joe. Mrs Joe uses her womanly duties as a weapon to throw her husband out of the house. She is not maternal or domestic at all as Pip's description of her attests: “She was tall and bony, and almost

always wore a coarse apron, fastened over her figure behind with two loops, and having a square impregnable bib in front, that was stuck full of pins and needles. She made it a powerful merit in herself, and a strong reproach against Joe, that she wore this apron so much" (8). She resents having to take care of Joe and Pip so much that sometimes preparing them supper becomes hazardous for them as a pin gets stuck into the bread and finds itself into their mouths (Dickens *Great Expectations* 10). In Catherine Waters's words, "Mrs Joe is very clearly defined by her lack of maternal qualities and her perversion of domestic values in Pip's narrative. [...] She is seen as a monstrous mother, a figure of deviance, feeding her family without love or due ceremony" (153).

In the Gargery marriage, the virtues attributed by middle-class ideology to the husband and wife are reversed. While Mrs Joe is shrewd and angry, Joe is extremely nice and kind. Pip describes him as "a mild, good-natured, sweet-tempered, easy-going, foolish, dear fellow" (8). Furthermore he states that instead of his sister, Joe is the one who sanctifies home for him (91) which he states "had never been a very pleasant place to me, because of my sister's temper" (90-91). Thus, Catherine Waters claims that "[i]n sanctifying the home, Joe fulfils the duty that devolved upon the domestic woman in Victorian middle-class ideology – that of the Angel in the House" (154). In fact, Pip likens Joe's attitude to a woman's when he is preparing to leave to go to London: "Joe laid his hand upon my shoulder with the touch of a woman", and years later he reminisces about Joe in feminine terms: "Oh *dear good faithful tender* Joe, I feel the *loving tremble of your hand* upon my arm [...] as if it had been the rustle of an *angel's wing*" (120) (emphasis added). Catherine Waters views this as one of "[t]he effects of Mrs Joe's failure to embody the womanly ideal" and adds that Joe's "feminisation in the narrative is an indication of Mrs Joe's emasculating power" (153). So there is the suggestion in the novel that according to Dickens, if women do not conform to the middle class ideal of womanhood, this will have the hazardous effect of emasculating their husbands.

However, just as in *Oliver Twist*, Nancy and Agnes were punished for going against the expectations of Victorian society, Mrs Joe is punished for trying to extend her influence to the way Joe runs the forge. Upon hearing that Joe had granted a half day's holiday to Pip and Orlick (a blacksmith who works for Joe) Mrs Joe instantly interferes by calling

Joe a fool and yelling at him: “You are a rich man, upon my life, to waste wages in that way. I wish I was his master” (96). However, she pays heavily for this wish and for interfering with her husband’s business when she is beaten with a hammer which Ayres calls “a masculine instrument and signifier” (88). This incident literally silences her as she is unable to speak anymore and turns her into an invalid in need of care. Thus, “[f]or attempting to steal power from her husband, she has been tamed” (Ayres 88), or in Lucy Frost’s words, she “is converted to placid goodness after she intrudes upon a male domain” (62). Pip ironically comments about his sister’s condition that “her temper was greatly improved” and she is no longer shrewd and angry but “patient” (103). Thus, Mrs Joe is shaped by Orlick’s hammer into submissiveness, a quality which middle class ideology thought the ideal woman should possess. Furthermore, it can be argued that Mrs Joe is punished into submissiveness because her “rage symbolically attacks the ideals so central to Dickens, for its source and object are the same – her loathing of domestic duties” (Thurin 206).

While Mrs Joe goes against the feminine ideal within her marriage, Miss Havisham has gone mad because she has not been able to marry. She was left at the altar by her fiancé on her wedding day, and hence missed the opportunity of becoming an “angel in the house.” She has become a grotesque figure condemned to live out her wedding day all her life. Pip describes her with these words:

I saw that everything with my view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its lustre, and was faded and yellow. I saw that the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes. I saw that the dress had been put upon the rounded figure of a young woman, and that the figure upon which it now hung loose, had shrunk to skin and bone. Once, I had been taken to see some ghastly waxwork at the Fair, representing I know not what impossible personage lying in state. Once, I had been taken to one of our old marsh churches to see a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress, that had been dug out of a vault under the church pavement. Now waxwork and skeleton seemed to have dark eyes that moved and looked at me. I should have cried out, if I could. (49)

Dickens’s depiction of Miss Havisham suggests that he thought women are useless, mere skeletons if they cannot marry and have a home of their own, which is a reflection of the dominant ideology of Victorian times. As Ayres argues,

Miss Havisham was once in the bloom of her youth, placing all of her hopes and expectations in marriage – as any good Victorian girl should do. After she has been forsaken at the altar, her subsequent despair and freezing of time are not only a psychological prison; they are social. Without marriage, women simply had very few options of how to survive in this society. (89)

Similar to his account of the lack of domestic virtues in Mrs Joe,

Pip's account of Miss Havisham [...] implicitly invokes an absent ideal of motherhood, and situates the narrator within the discourse of domesticity. Through the depiction of female deviance, Pip assumes a shared image of maternity that is not only constitutive of his own identity, but of his readership as well. In articulating the values and assumptions of domestic ideology, Pip positions his readers as middle-class individuals and draws them together by basing his account upon a concept of family and female identity supposedly held in common. (Catherine Waters 159)

A female character in the novel who conforms to the womanly ideal and is rewarded at the end for her submissiveness and selflessness with marriage is Biddy. Since Mrs Joe is in need of constant care, Biddy comes to stay with them to take care of her. She has all the qualities of the domestic woman that Mrs Joe lacked and becomes “a blessing to the household” (104). As well as being a competent and dutiful housewife, Biddy is also good at learning without making an effort. While Pip works hard at his learning after coming in from the forge, Biddy seems to manage learning the same things effortlessly. However, because according to Victorian middle class ideology a woman is never expected to be more advanced than a man in learning, Biddy is apologetic about her abilities in this area and likens it to an illness: “I suppose I must catch it – like a cough” she says to Pip (106). In Pip's eyes, Biddy is “an extraordinary girl” (106), however she does not want to be seen as extraordinary. She wants to be seen as the kind of girl acceptable to Victorian ideology, so she talks about her learning abilities like an illness that she wants to avoid but cannot.

While Estella is haughty and arrogant, Biddy is kind and selfless. Additionally, while Estella symbolises all that Pip yearns for and is the cause of his unhappiness and discontent, Biddy reminds him of the life he is meant to live: “Biddy was immeasurably better than Estella, and [...] the plain, honest, working life to which I was born, had nothing to be ashamed of, but offered me sufficient means of self-respect and

happiness” (112). As Catherine Waters states: “Biddy is made to stand for home and the forge, to represent the values of domesticity” (163). As a “truly good domestic woman”, Biddy is rewarded by marrying Joe and achieving domestic bliss when Mrs Joe dies (Ayres 88).

While according to Pip, Estella was “beautiful and self-possessed” (48), Biddy “was not beautiful – she was common, and could not be like Estella.” Even though not beautiful, she has the virtues of the “angel in the house” as she is “pleasant and wholesome and sweet-tempered” (106). The only part of her appearance that Pip describes as pretty are her eyes which he admires, however, more for the moral virtues of thoughtfulness and attentiveness that they possess than their prettiness (Catherine Waters 164). Thus “[h]er eyes suggest a capacity for kindness and self-sacrifice stereotypically associated with the middle-class feminine ideal” (Catherine Waters 164). Even though she is the ideal female, Pip is not attracted to her because he views her as common and hence not compatible with the gentlemanly lifestyle he is pursuing. In Catherine Waters’s words, “Pip draws a distinction [...] between the charms of Biddy and Estella that is based upon a difference of class. ‘Beauty’ is made an attribute of gentility. Biddy’s designation as ‘common’ refers at once to her rank and her physiognomy” (164) and “[t]he opposing incarnations of womanhood to be found in Estella and Biddy locate Pip’s movement between [...] competing views of the ‘gentleman’ as a figure distinguished by birth or merit” (151).

During the fourth year of Pip’s apprenticeship, a mysterious man called Jaggers – who turns out to be a lawyer – informs him that he has been granted some property by a mysterious benefactor which he is to use to turn himself into a gentleman. This news changes his whole life as he finds himself on the way to London to lead a completely different life from the one he led in the village and to be educated and moulded into a gentleman, in short, to realise his great expectations. Since Pip remembers running into Jaggers at Satis House when he used to visit there, makes him assume that his secret benefactor is Miss Havisham. However, he does not voice this assumption.

When he gets to London he goes to Jaggers’s office to learn about the arrangements made for him. He is to stay with Herbert Pocket for a few days until he goes to Herbert Pocket’s father’s house from whom he is to receive lessons and at whose house he is to

stay. These lessons he is to receive, however, have no definitive purpose other than making him acquire gentlemanly habits as Mr Jaggers tells Pip that he is “not designed for any profession” but that he “should be well enough educated [...] if [he] could ‘hold [his] own’ with the average young men in prosperous circumstances” (168). While his apprenticeship with Joe had the purpose of acquiring the “know-how” of the vocation of blacksmith, his education with Matthew Pocket will teach him the “know-how” of leading an idle gentlemanly life (Althusser “Ideology” 132). In other words, his education in London is “an entirely bourgeois thing” and involves “little more than accent, table manners, and clothes” (House 159). Prior to the creation of an upwardly mobile middle class by the opportunities the Industrial Revolution brought to society, a gentleman’s education was a classically based one received in public schools. “However, the influx of increasingly practical and business-oriented middle class men into the ranks of the gentleman called for a different sort of education from the classics, a course of study designed for social prestige” (Karen Volland Waters 18). So Pip’s education in London has the ultimate aim of preparing him for acceptance into bourgeois society which fails because Pip mistakes it for aristocratic society and acquires wasteful habits which go against the virtues of thrift and industry espoused by the bourgeoisie under the influence of Utilitarianism according to which “[h]appiness could be earned only through sustained labor and the sacrifice of immediate pleasure” (Altick *Victorian* 168).

He is taken by Jaggers’s clerk, Wemmick to Barnard’s Inn, which Pip supposes to be a genteel hotel but which in fact is a depressing and dismal place made up of “the dingiest collection of shabby buildings ever squeezed together in a rank corner” (148). This constitutes the first disappointment of Pip’s regarding London and his expectations. However, while arrangements are made for Pip to stay with the Pockets, he opts to stay with Herbert in Barnard’s Inn as the two become immediate friends. The two friends quickly settle into a life of idleness as Pip misunderstands what being a gentleman actually means. He thinks that being a gentleman entails having an aristocratic lifestyle and he and Herbert live accordingly. He decorates “the chambers in some quite unnecessary and inappropriate way or other” (187), acquires a servant and on the whole Dickens criticises the lifestyle of the aristocracy through the description Pip gives of theirs: “We spent as much money as we could, and got as little for it as people could

make up their minds to give us. We were always more or less miserable, and most of our acquaintance were in the same condition. There was a gay fiction among us that we were constantly enjoying ourselves, and a skeleton truth that we never did" (234). Philip Mason claims that in Dickens, "[t]here was a streak of egalitarianism [...], something that disliked the whole idea of an aristocracy; he felt jealous and ill at ease in the presence of an aristocrat" because he "was instinctively antagonistic to a man born in easy circumstances" (121). So Pip's embrace of an aristocratic lifestyle is one of the causes of the failure of his dream of becoming a gentleman because according to Dickens and his readers who were influenced by the tenets of Utilitarianism, the Victorian gentleman rose in society not through idleness but through his own effort and hard work.

While Pip is being made into a gentleman, Herbert is a born gentleman despite his lack of money because he has gentlemanly virtues. However, because of his nice and amiable disposition, he falls in step with Pip's way of living, which corrupts him. As Pip comments: "My lavish habits led his easy nature into expenses that he could not afford, corrupted the simplicity of his life, and disturbed his peace with anxieties" (232). It can be argued that as well as illustrating the virtues of the ideal Victorian gentleman in his own person, Herbert also acts as the mouthpiece for Dickens to illustrate what a true gentleman is when Herbert states that "it is a principle of [...] [my father] that no man who was not a true gentleman at heart, ever was, since the world began, a true gentleman in manner. He says, no varnish can hide the grain of the wood; and that the more varnish you put on, the more the grain will express itself" (155). So for Dickens a true gentleman is one who displays gentlemanly behaviour, not one who displays gentlemanly appearance. In fact, the working class Joe is much more a gentleman than Pip throughout the novel as he constantly supports Pip from childhood to adulthood, even paying his debts to save him from prison. In fact this act of gentlemanly benevolence of Joe's provides the stimulus for Pip to abandon his aristocratic ambitions and become a true bourgeois gentleman by working his way up the social ladder and paying his debt to Joe with money he himself earns from his work as a clerk in a company. As a result of Joe's influence, in David Castronovo's words, Pip "turns his life around and begins to work and live an upright existence" (50-51). Towards the end Pip acknowledges the gentlemanly quality of Joe when he calls him a "gentle Christian

man” (394). According to Castronovo “the placement of the word Christian is Dickens’s way of continuing the debate on what a gentleman is” (51). Thus, according to Dickens the moral virtue of the true Victorian gentleman is influenced by the Christian faith.

As stated above, Herbert Pocket is the other true gentleman of the novel and his contrast with Pip is made clear in their choice of women. While Pip aspires to become someone good enough for the haughty and upper class Estella to accept, Herbert is engaged to “a penniless girl who is nothing more than the daughter of an invalided ship’s purser” (Hobsbaum 232). Herbert is in love with Clara and ready to make her his wife even though she is below him in social rank because she possesses all the domestic virtues that the Victorian bourgeoisie required their wives to have. In fact, she is described as an “angel in the house” figure in the novel:

There was something so natural and winning in Clara’s resigned way of looking at these stores in detail, as Herbert pointed them out – and something so confiding, loving, and innocent, in her modest manner of yielding herself to Herbert’s embracing arm – and something so gentle in her, so much needing protection. (319)

Even though Herbert Pocket has true gentlemanly virtues, his mother has aristocratic aspirations which cause her to neglect her family and household which manifests itself in Pip’s narrative as criticisms of “her domestic mismanagement and neglect of her children” (Catherine Waters 156). The Pocket house is run by servants while Mrs Pocket spends her days idly reading. Pip’s description of Mrs Pocket shows that he sees her as an inadequate mother since her children “were not growing up or being brought up, but were tumbling up” (159). In fact her neglect and inadequacy places her children in constant danger of being hurt. Despite the fact that she has had eight children, including Herbert, she cannot even hold a baby properly without placing it in danger. When the nursemaid hands the baby over to Mrs Pocket at the lunch table she warns her to hold it properly “or you’ll get its head under the table” (164). Even then she cannot manage as the baby hits its head on the table, and the nursemaid quickly takes it back from her and puts it on Mrs Pocket’s lap herself. However, given a pair of nut-crackers to play with, the baby is still in danger of being hurt as its mother completely forgets about it while she falls into discussion with one of the dinner guests.

Dickens's depiction of the new lavish lifestyle of Pip's and the inadequacy of Mrs Pocket as a mother is a reflection of his dislike of aristocratic values and pretensions. By pointing out how the domestic inadequacy of Mrs Pocket puts her family in danger, Dickens is actually depicting the importance of women possessing domestic skills within the Victorian household, as opposed to the idleness of aristocratic women. Thus, he idealises the domestic skills that the bourgeoisie requires women to have. According to Chew and Altick, Dickens's "pictures of the upper classes are almost always prejudiced and exaggerated, generally inaccurate, seldom kindly" (1351). His unkindness towards the aristocracy could be argued to stem from the lack of morality and restraint he thought they possessed. Thus, Pip emulates an aristocratic lifestyle of excess spending and idleness which only leaves him in debt. According to Juliet John,

[a] gentleman stops being a gentleman, for Dickens, when the appearance of gentility is more important than the moral elevation that should ideally characterize the gentleman; that is, a gentleman becomes a villain when gentility ceases to be an end in itself and becomes the means to attain power, status, and money – in other words, the means to gratify the self. (144-45)

Pip is of course not a villain, however, it can be said that his expectations of becoming a gentleman fail because he gave more importance to the attainment of gentility and gentlemanly appearance than to the attainment of moral virtues that a gentleman should possess.

While Pip confuses being gentlemanly with being aristocratic, Jaggers's clerk Wemmick is a part of the new urban professional class. He leads two completely different lives: his "official" life in London and his home life in his "castle" in Walworth (176), which is really "a little wooden cottage" (175). Wemmick's two separate lives are a reflection of the Victorian belief in the separation of the private world of the home and the public one of work. Wemmick says of this separation: "the office is one thing, and private life is another. When I go into the office, I leave the Castle behind me, and when I come into the Castle, I leave the office behind me" (177). While at home he is warm and cordial, and takes care of his aged father – whom he calls "aged parent" – he gradually hardens out of it as he approaches the office, as Pip observes:

Wemmick got dryer and harder as we went along, and his mouth tightened into a post-office again. At last, when we got to his place of business and he pulled out his key from his coat collar, he looked as unconscious of his Walworth property as if the Castle and the drawbridge and the harbour and the lake and the fountain and the Aged, had all been blown into space (178).

Even though generally the Victorians saw the world of the home dominated by women, the fact that Wemmick is a single man living with and taking care of his father raises a problematized case in Dickens's handling of the theme. Natalie McKnight argues that Wemmick represents the fact that

[t]he competitive and increasingly fast-paced nature of the industrial economy required men to suppress their emotions and render themselves almost as machine-like as the mechanisms of industry around them. Only in the safety of the home could the man become fully human again, so the separation between home and work underscored a separation between heart and head as well as female and male. (189)

So while Wemmick acts "like an automaton at work," at home he behaves "in the most affectionate, domestic, and imaginative way as he takes care of his aged father in the mock-gothic castle he has built" (McKnight 189).

Keeping the dangers of the Victorian city outside, Wemmick has turned his home into a medieval castle complete with gothic windows, a flagstaff, a drawbridge over "a chasm about four feet wide and two deep" (176), and a little garden at the back with a pig, fowls, rabbits and vegetable plots. About his home Wemmick remarks: "If you can suppose the little place besieged, it would hold out a devil of a time in point of provisions" (176). Wemmick's house is a castle built to keep the dangerous world outside since as Joe states in the novel, "a Englishman's ouse [sic] is his Castle" (396). In other words, Wemmick's "castle" is a "celebration of the domestic merits of hearth and home" (Young 98), and it is a castle built "against [...] the encroachments of the outer social world which seems to Wemmick to threaten his private world of family and feasting" (Grant 146). According to Arlene Young, "[t]he defining features of the lower middle class – financial marginality, the significance of the domestic sphere, diminutiveness, and limited prospects – are crystallized in [...] [Wemmick's] miniature castle" (98). Like many members of Victorian lower middle class however, he has aspirations of upward mobility since his castle is "a freehold" attained "as a result of [...] [his] own thrift" which was an important Victorian middle class virtue (Young 98).

To go back to Pip and his 'great expectations', it can be argued that his attempts at realising them corrupts his life because of their source, which turn out not to be Miss Havisham – the source of whose richness is the money her father earned from the family brewery (in other words untainted money) – but money earned by Magwitch, a convict that Pip had helped when he was seven years old – in other words money tainted by crime. Even though Magwitch too worked hard for his money by raising sheep in Australia, the fact that he got transported there for life for his crimes is enough to corrupt his money for Pip, as well as for Dickens and his readers.

Throughout the novel, Dickens depicts Magwitch as a monstrous figure. When Pip first helps him by bringing him food, the convict gulps down the food like a dog according to Pip:

I have often watched a large dog of ours eating his food; and I now noticed a decided similarity between the dog's way of eating and the man's. The man took strong, sharp, sudden bites, just like the dog. He swallowed, or rather snapped up, every mouthful, too soon and too fast; and he looked sideways here and there while he ate, as if he thought there was danger in every direction of somebody's coming to take the pie away. He was altogether too unsettled in his mind over it, to appreciate it comfortably, I thought, or to have anybody to dine with him, without making a chop with his jaws at the visitor. In all of which particulars he was very like the dog.
(17)

While the proper way to dine is to appreciate the food one's eating, the convict's way of eating makes him inhuman and causes Pip to categorise him with the lower animals. So, from the start Magwitch is an outcast from proper society which taints his money for Pip. Later on he remarks: "The abhorrence in which I held the man, the dread I had of him, the repugnance with which I shrank from him, could not have been exceeded if he had been some terrible beast" (273).

Even though he is heavily in debt, after finding out about the source of his legacy, Pip refuses to accept any more money from the convict. According to Ross H. Dabney, there is the suggestion in the novel that Pip's disdain for the source of his legacy "is founded on the connection established between criminality and his own fortune" (139). Furthermore, since he sees Estella as the reward of his becoming a gentleman, he thinks that "having Estella on Magwitch's money instead of Miss Havisham's would profane her" (Dabney 142). Even long before he learns about the source of his legacy, for Pip

the criminal world and Estella are irreconcilable and should be kept apart. While he is waiting for her in the coach office in London, Pip runs into Wemmick who takes him to Newgate Prison. After the visit he regrets it because he somehow feels that the prison has tainted him and thus might taint Estella:

I thought of the beautiful young Estella, proud and refined, coming towards me, and I thought with absolute abhorrence of the contrast between the jail and her. I wished that Wemmick had not met me, or that I had not yielded to him and gone with him, so that, of all days in the year, on this day I might not have had Newgate in my breath and on my clothes. I beat the prison dust off my feet as I sauntered to and fro, and I shook it out of my dress, and I exhaled its air from my lungs. So contaminated did I feel, remembering who was coming. (226).

Later on, when he finds out about Magwitch, he reflects “on the abyss between Estella in her pride and beauty, and the returned transport whom [he] harbour[s]” (299). So the discovery of his legacy ends his great expectations because he cannot attain his prize – Estella – with a criminal’s money without tainting her.

For Magwitch, a gentleman is someone who can be bought: “If I ain’t a gentleman, nor yet ain’t got no learning, I’m the owner of such” he says (275). Thus, “[o]ne of the cornerstones of Magwitch’s belief is that the money which defines the gentleman and validates his existence should be money which he has not earned” (Morgentaler 79). This belief of Magwitch’s is a relic of the past however, and is doomed to fail because for the Victorians, not the idle aristocrat, but the self-made man is the new gentleman.

While Pip is lying sick in bed, his debtors come to arrest him but cannot do so on account of his illness. Escaping imprisonment at first by illness, he is ultimately saved from it by Joe who pays off his creditors. From this point on in the novel, along with Pip, the readers start to notice the importance of honest work in attaining a middle-class position in society which can be argued to be Dickens’s main point in *Great Expectations*. Corrupted by money earned by a criminal, Pip is saved from this corruption by Joe’s money which has been earned by honest work at the forge. Determined to make up for his past mistakes, Pip leaves England to work as a clerk in Clarriker & Co. By working hard there and living frugally, he manages to pay his debt to Joe and thus becomes a true Victorian gentleman. Pip’s comments on the company he

works for embodies the Victorian work ethic: “We were not in a grand way of business, but we had a good name, and worked for our profits, and did very well” (408).

Returning to England after eleven years, Pip goes back to his village to find Joe and Biddy in domestic bliss with two children, the elder of whom they have named after him. From there he goes to visit Satis House. The house, the brewery and all the other buildings have been torn down after Miss Havisham’s death and there he runs into Estella. Once proud and haughty, Estella has changed as a result of an unhappy marriage with a cruel husband. She is now soft and kinder, in other words, closer to the Victorian feminine ideal:

The freshness of her beauty was [...] gone, but its indescribable majesty and its indescribable charms remained. Those attractions in it I had seen before; what I had never seen before, was the saddened, softened light of the once proud eyes; what I had never felt before, was the friendly touch of the once insensible hand. (411)

Estella herself admits that she has been reshaped by her marriage: “I have been bent and broken, but – I hope – into a better shape” (412). Gail Turley Houston claims that “she has been ‘bent and broken’ into ‘better shape’ in order to fulfill Pip’s desires” (166). Thus they leave the site of Satis House hand in hand with Pip remarking that “I saw no shadow of another parting from her” (412).

Adopted by the rich Miss Havisham, Estella has lived a life of comfort and received a lady’s education in France. However, her middle class comfort does not bring her happiness because she is also tainted by crime, since the convict Magwitch turns out to be her father. Thus, in a way, like Pip, she is also doomed to lead an unhappy life due to being related to a criminal. Miss Havisham makes Estella a tool in the war she has declared against men due to being abandoned on her wedding day, and raises her to be cold and break men’s hearts. So, it can be said that Estella is punished by being thrown into a cruel marriage and thus humbled through her experience because she is not a lady by blood, but low-born.

In the original ending Dickens wrote, Estella and Pip run into each other in London with Estella thinking Pip’s nephew is in fact his son, with the suggestion that this is their final encounter and they ‘part’ from each other forever. At the suggestion of his friend Edward Bulwer Lytton, however, Dickens changed the ending to a ‘happy’ one

suggesting the reconciliation of Pip and Estella, and a possible marriage between them about which Dickens wrote to his friend Forster that “I have no doubt the story will be more acceptable through the alteration” (1: 289), “more acceptable”, that is, to his readers. In changing the ending of his novel to one that suggests a more conventional happy ending, we see Dickens’s anxiety in pleasing his readers. So it can be argued that while in *Great Expectations* Dickens interpellates his readers as middle class by reflecting the values of that class in the novel, he himself in turn cannot escape being interpellated by that very class by reflecting its values and taste in the novel’s ending.

Furthermore, the fact that Pip ends up with Estella and not with Biddy, reflects the fact that he has finally become a gentleman through his own efforts. Even though he is no longer snobbish and ashamed of Joe and his home, he cannot return there because his status has changed. House argues that

[t]he book is the clearest artistic triumph of the Victorian bourgeoisie on its own special ground. The expectations lose their greatness, and Pip is saved from the grosser dangers of wealth; but by the end he has gained a wider and deeper knowledge of life, he is less rough, better spoken, better read, better mannered; he has friends as various as Herbert Pocket, Jaggers, and Wemmick; he has earned in his business abroad enough to pay his debts, he has become third partner in a firm that ‘had a good name, and worked for its profits, and did very well’. (156)

Thus, as a gentleman, it would not be suitable for Pip to live his old life in the village. Even though he abhors the convict, “[t]he social ideas of Pip and Magwitch differ only in taste. Though Pip has shuddered at the convict for being coarse and low, he consoles [Magwitch] on his death-bed with the very thought that first fired and then kept alive his own love for Estella: ‘You had a child. . . . She is a lady and very beautiful’” (House 157). While at the beginning of the novel there was a chasm between Estella and Pip which Pip tried to overcome by becoming a gentleman and rising to Estella’s social level, they are able to reconcile at the end with the suggestion of them becoming a couple only after Estella has been revealed to be a convict’s daughter and hence much more Pip’s social equal than he originally thought.

Furthermore, in relation to Magwitch's escape from the law, just like the middle class characters in *Oliver Twist* go unpunished by hiding Oliver – a suspected thief – because of their class position and the good intentions that come with that position, the gentlemen (Pip, Herbert and Startop) who try to help Magwitch escape go unpunished, while the convict is sentenced to death from coming back to England from Australia to where he had been transported for life. So, once again good intentions and being a member of the middle class result in criminal conduct going unpunished.

To sum up, the protagonist of *Great Expectations*, is ambitious to become a gentleman and attains this chance when he is given the opportunity to be so by a secret benefactor. Even though in the past, the gentlemanly ideal belonged to the upper class, with the ascendancy of the middle class in Victorian times, the class distinction contained within the concept changed shape and it became attainable by anyone having the proper means and proper manners, morals, education and virtues. Thus, Pip's expectations of becoming a gentleman fail at first because he does not realise that it depends not only on the means but also on proper behaviour and morals. He finally manages to attain that status when he conforms to middle class expectations and becomes a partner in a respectable company by his own efforts. According to Newey, Dickens's texts are [...] conduits for the inculcation and reinforcement of particular attitudes and beliefs" (4). In *Great Expectations* what Dickens inculcates and reinforces through the figure of Pip is the middle class values of hard work, moral strength and the manifestations of these values in the bourgeois gentlemanly ideal.

CONCLUSION

The two novels – *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* – analysed in this thesis were written in a period which witnessed remarkable social changes. The main cause of these changes was the industrial revolution which transformed the whole social fabric by changing the economy of the nation from one based on agriculture to one based on industrial production. The new opportunities opened up by the industrial revolution allowed for a much more flexible social mobility which resulted in the emergence of a powerful middle class. As well as having financial power, the members of the middle class had the opportunity of having the influence of their values felt on all classes of society. Their values influenced not only those below them in social rank but also the aristocracy which lost the unquestionable political and economic power it used to hold prior to the industrial revolution.

As a member of this newly powerful middle class, Charles Dickens was shaped by the bourgeois ideology upheld by this class and as a result his novels reflect the values and beliefs of this ideology and this fact is reflected in his novels *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*. The protagonists of both novels come from humble backgrounds. While Oliver is born and raised in a workhouse among paupers, the protagonist of *Great Expectations*, Pip, has a working class background as he is born and raised in a village by his sister and her blacksmith husband. However, both manage to avoid living a lower class life for different reasons that reflect Victorian middle class ideology. Oliver turns out to be the son of a gentleman and hence inherits his rightful place in middle class society. Pip, on the other hand, dreams of becoming a gentleman and despite the initial failure of the realisation of his dream, he finally achieves it through hard work.

These two novels illustrate that Dickens was truly a writer of his times and class. His thinking and outlook were shaped by middle class ideology, which he reflected in his works, and thus influenced the thinking of his readers while at the same time conforming to it so that they would continue to buy and read his works. In Althusserian terms, he was interpellated into a middle class subject position which shaped his literary works. These literary works, in their turn, interpellated

his readers – Dickens’s readers belonged to various social classes, however, the majority of his readers were members of the middle class as was the case with the Victorian reading public in general – who read his fiction with great relish.

Under the influence of Utilitarianism and Evangelicalism, middle class ideology stressed the importance of morality, hard work, respectability, benevolence, home and domesticity, social upstanding and family. Since Dickens was a member of the middle class, we find its ideology stamped on his way of thinking and hence, reflected in his works. As a reflection of this ideology in his works, in *Oliver Twist*, Oliver is rewarded with his inheritance because he embodies the middle class virtues of goodness and morality which, the novel suggests, he inherited from his father even though he never actually met him. Pip, in *Great Expectations*, on the other hand, is rewarded because he learns and illustrates the value of hard work in attaining a respectable social position and becoming an upstanding member of the middle class.

While the fact that Oliver is illegitimate can be termed problematic in terms of an Althusserian reading because illegitimacy contradicts middle class values, Dickens is able to justify having him as his hero by showing that he possesses the innate goodness the middle class expected its members to have and by making the middle class position he is interpellated into, his birthright. According to John, Dickens’s “texts expose the very structures – emotional, linguistic, and ideological – on which they rest. However, to expose is not the same as to reject, and Dickens’s texts retain a distinctive tendency to uphold and undermine beliefs and structures simultaneously” (19). Thus, Dickens is able to contain in Oliver the contradictory facts of illegitimacy and deserving a middle class position.

According to Malcolm Andrews, “[d]omestic happiness and efficiency lie at the heart of Dickens’s system of rehabilitation, both as a novelist and as a practical social reformer. The place of the virtuous woman was properly in the home” (13). So, by refusing to be rehabilitated by having a chance at achieving domestic happiness within respectable society, Nancy is punished by death, while Rose Maylie, despite being tainted by the suspicion of illegitimacy, is rewarded for her virtue by achieving “domestic happiness” with Harry Maylie.

According to Monroe Engel, Dickens “believed in self-help and independence and even perhaps in the salutary effect of work” (57). So, the initial efforts of Pip to achieve the gentlemanly ideal fail because instead of depending on the middle class values of self-help and hard work, they display aristocratic ostentatiousness and lack of restraint. Only after he works hard for his respectable position is he able to become a true gentleman and win the hand of Estella.

Pip’s plight and the happiness he achieves through hard work in *Great Expectations* illustrate that Dickens believed in the moral values that the members of the Victorian middle class expected to find in a gentleman. Thus, at one point in the novel the blacksmith Joe is described as a “gentle Christian man” (394). While not going as far as calling him a gentleman, there is a suggestion in this description that at this point Joe embodies gentlemanly virtues more than Pip does, and hence deserves to be called as such more than Pip, since Dickens believed in the importance of “Christian charity and good-natured benevolence” (Thomson 114). Thus, Joe displays “good-natured benevolence” by rescuing Pip from imprisonment by paying off his debts, and makes him almost a gentleman in the eyes of Dickens and his readers. In other words, while “Dickens [...] [had a] bourgeois attitude toward the working man and his institutions [he] [...] could still move his readers with stories of splendid behavior by humble people” (Osborne 164).

While Dickens is sometimes described as a reformer, he is far from that because he conformed to and reflected the beliefs of the privileged middle class of which he was a part in confirmation of the Althusserian thesis that ideology shapes individuals’ subjectivity (Althusser “Ideology” 170). Thus, as the analysis of his two novels above has shown, Dickens was more on the side of practicality and benevolence towards those who were less fortunate than himself than a complete change in the system, and advocated these ideas to his readers by depicting corrupt and incompetent individuals within the system, rather than the corruption of the entire system “because he believed that when institutions and their administration were remedied the fundamental goodness of human nature would make the reform of individuals an easy matter. [...] His basic belief in the primary benevolent impulses of man – affection, charity, gaiety, fun, kindliness,

spontaneity – brought within the compass of his sympathy any man or woman in whom he discerned the working of these impulses” (Chew and Altick 1351).

In Althusserian terms, as an individual who has been interpellated into a middle class subject position, Dickens shaped his works under the influence of middle class ideology and its beliefs which resulted in his works becoming means of interpellating his readers into a middle class ideological mindset. In other words, Dickens’s novels can be seen as a tool of middle class ideology to ‘recruit’ subjects among the individuals in the Victorian era or ‘transform’ those individuals into subjects via interpellation (Althusser “Ideology” 174).

As was explained above, in his novel *Oliver Twist*, Dickens saves his hero from a life of crime and poverty and interpellates him into his rightful middle class position. Thus, by rewarding the good behaviour of Oliver, Dickens shows his readers that conforming to proper behaviour advocated by middle class ideology results in that behaviour being rewarded with a privileged middle class lifestyle. In other words, he not only interpellates Oliver Twist as a middle class subject, he also interpellates his readers by showing what a middle class life entails and how that behaviour and lifestyle can be rewarding.

Pip, the protagonist of the second novel, *Great Expectations*, is born into a working class family. However, throughout the novel he is interpellated into a middle class subject position and at the end of the novel he becomes a perfect middle class Victorian gentleman by earning a comfortable living in the colonies and displaying perfect gentlemanly behaviour. At first Pip mistakes gentlemanliness with aristocratic lavishness and pretentiousness, however this only leads to debt. He is saved from debt by the blacksmith Joe whom Pip calls a “gentle Christian man” in the novel for his benevolence since benevolence is a behaviour advocated by middle class ideology (394). Similar to *Oliver Twist*, Pip is rewarded with a middle class subject position after he abandons his aristocratic pretensions and displays hard work and moral strength. Thus, as Pip is interpellated as the perfect Victorian gentleman, Dickens’s readers are also interpellated when Dickens shows how aristocratic pretensions lead to nothing but ruin and that what one should aspire to is hard work, moral strength and dignity which were advocated by middle class ideology.

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